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PC PowerPlay CONTENTS

ISSUE 48 MAY 2000

50 Deus Ex



46 B-17 II: THE MIGHTY EIGHTH

What's a flight sim when it isn't a flight sim?
A roleplaying game, of course.

9 Editorial

Another chapter from the Ziffer Book of Enlightenment

NEWS

10 Spotlight

Full report from Gamestock; the latest update on Warcraft 3; new shots of Max Payne and Oni; plus your votes for Australia's Most Wanted.

20 Net Game News

Star Trek and Thief go online. Plus, the biggest multiplayer game ever launches.

24 News Feature

Windows 2000 is here. But is it any good?

SUBSCRIBE

35 Save 33% and be in with a chance to win a Gateway computer!



PREVIEWS

26 Grand Prix 3

The chequered flag is finally in sight.

36 Starlancer

From that Wing Commander dude.

40 Colin McRae Rally 2

It's like the first one - but with a 2.

44 Shogun: Total War

Made in Australia via Japan and the UK.

46 B-17 II: The Mighty Eighth

Ten blokes in a tin can.

50 Deus Ex

It's not rude at all. Honest.

54 Motocross Madness 2

Crazy men on bikes.

GAMEPLAY

98 The Oracle & Code

More moral decisions than Planescape: Torment.

94 Online

Web resources for UT

94 The Sims

Make your virtual life succeed where your real one failed.

98 SWAT 3

Look, just don't shoot the hostages.

36 Starlancer



54 Motocross Madness 2



TECH

102 Tech News

The bit where we don't mention games.

104 Tech Feature

All you need to know about DVD.

108 Hotware

The newest stuff to plug into your PC.

110 Setup

Dr Dan invites you to trial his bedside manner.

THE OTHER BITS

114 CD Guide

We invented Gaming Goodness - and don't let anyone tell you otherwise. Especially if they're American.

122 Letters

Hang on, isn't it actually called In-Box?

125 Competitions

Save yourself \$90. Unless you send \$90 worth of entries, natch.

126 Diversions

On the periphery of computer gaming.

128 Read Error

Now starring Tony the Reviewing Monkey!

130 Next Month

Remember, belief is everything. Daikatana WILL happen...



40 COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2

The Flying Scotsman returns for the second leg of his acclaimed rally sim.



26 Grand Prix 3

It's on the grid, awaiting starter's orders...

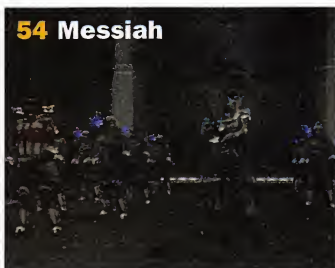
ISSUE 48 REVIEWS

54 Review Contents
56 Messiah
60 Battlezone 2
66 Croc 2

68 Ford Racing
69 World Manager 2000
70 Nox
74 Invictus

76 NASCAR Revolution
78 Rising Sun
80 Ultima Online
82 Airport Inc.

83 KA-52 Alligator
84 Army Men In Space
86 The Score List



54 Messiah



60 Battlezone 2



70 Nox



74 Invictus

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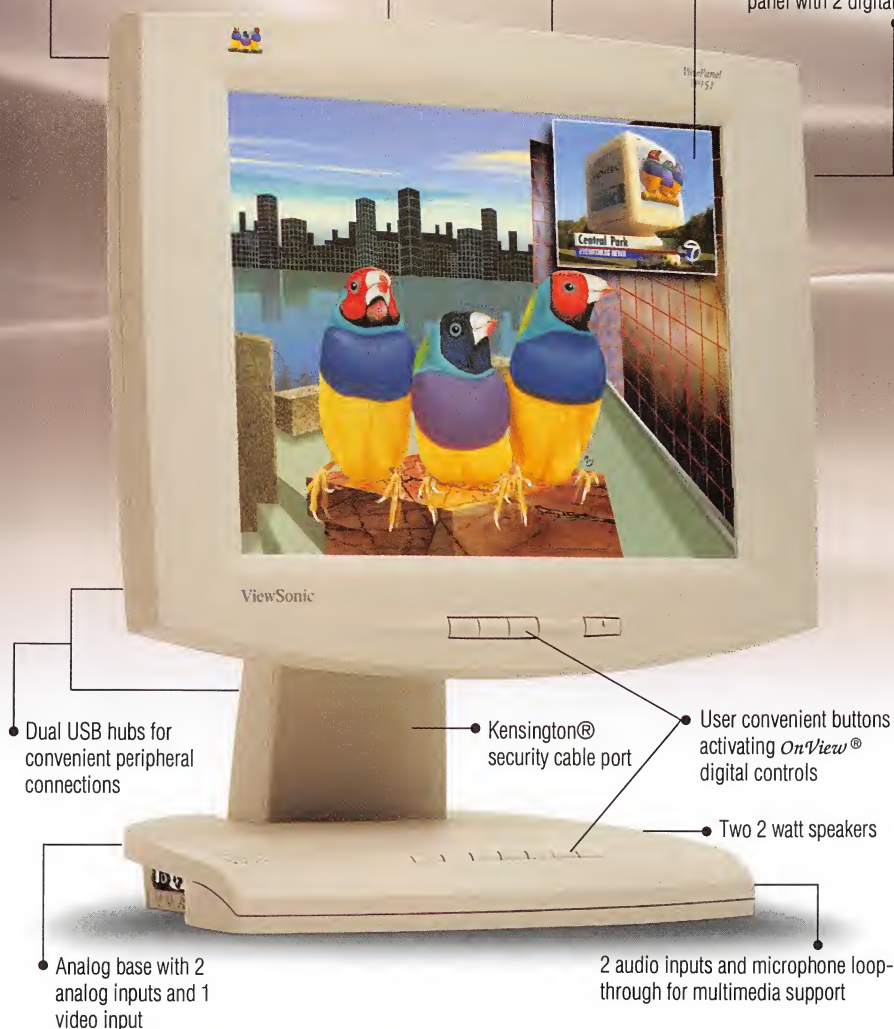
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Send a sample of your work to

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Malcolm = Fiendish Observational Comedian

David = Monolithic Fishmonger X

March = Alarmingly-Named Wolfman

Ashley = Gorky's Zygotic Glove Puppet

Harry = Loose-Lipped Controller

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I can't believe it's not water!

Sitting in a bar in Seattle, after a long day of gaming, I came to two impressive realisations. One was that I was a long way from home. The other, which came as my glass was being topped up with another stubby of America's finest 'I can't believe it's not water', was that maybe this wasn't such a bad thing after all - seeing as Barbra Streisand was touring.

Microsoft's Gamestock was most definitely a strong show, and few publishers would be unhappy to have people like Chris Roberts, Bruce Shelley and Alex Garden working to create games for them. The titles on show were great, but the over-whelming sense of a strong future was never far off. The X-Box was still under wraps, FreeLancer was only on video, massively multiplayer games were everywhere, and what the hell is Alex Garden working on?

It's all out there. No, really. But enough about the future, look what's here in the present! We've reviewed the soul-possession wonder that is Messiah,

given you the final word on one of the most anticipated genre-mixers out there -

Battlezone 2 - and shown off

Westwood's latest take on the world of demons, dragons and goblins with Nox. And that's just the reviews.

We've got a truly international range of previews, with long, hard looks at the likes of GP3 (from San

Francisco), Colin McRae 2 (from London), StarLancer and Motocross

Madness 2 (from Seattle) and Shogun (from Brisbane). What do you mean it's not...? Hey! People forget far too quickly that Brisbane held World Expo '88. He hear you Brisbane!

And check out our Sims playguide for tips on having happy little Sims. Or if you don't want happy Sims, just rich ones, use the 'Serial Murderer' trick listed. It's not pretty (at all) but it is effective. And that plasma-screen TV is so damn tempting, it'll drive people to do anything...

Cheers,

Dan Ziffer, Editor



●●spotlight

Gamestock

PEACE, LOVE AND GAMES. AHHH



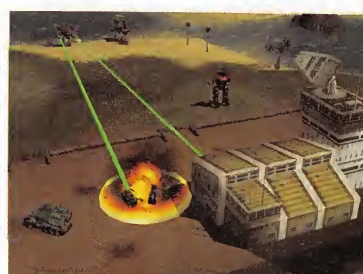
OZ GETS DIRTY

The second game from Ratbag, the creators of Powerslide, will finally see the light of day in Australia months after its completion and subsequent release overseas. *Dirt Track Racing* (previewed PCPP #41) has been without a local publisher until now, with reports from Ratbag that they're just about to sign on the dotted line with a major local distributor. A release in May is scheduled. Those that withstood the import temptation will be rewarded with several updates and changes before the games hits the shelves. Best of all, Ratbag is expected to sign a deal with Holden for naming rights to the game. Holden Dirt Track Racing will feature classic cars from the 60's onwards, as well as some of Holden's more recent beasts. Expect a full review soon!



Microsoft's Gamestock 2000 event has rolled around again, this year with the happy (and slightly hippie) theme of "Peace, Love and Games". Well, it looked cool on their T-shirts anyway. Many new game announcements were made, and progress on several existing titles was on display. But of course, you're all wondering about the Box. The **X-Box**. Unfortunately, there were no announcements made on the day, but at least Microsoft are no longer "not commenting on speculation" and are actually acknowledging its existence.

What was on show was a compilation of sequel-mania and impressive takes on existing genres. One of the most exciting titles shown was **Crimson Skies**, an air combat adventure with a swashbuckling feel. Set in an alternate-reality 1937, you star as Nathan Zachary, a dashing air pirate with a lot on his hands. The artwork and feel of the game are fantastic, but the game balance will be the key factor in its success when it releases later this year. Also impressing was **MechWarrior 4**, from the newly-affiliated Microsoft FASA Interactive. Only a few of the 21 playable mechs were on display, but the detail in the movement and effects looks fantastic. (The most crowd-pleasing moment of the day was seeing the Mechs annihilate two tiny *Motocross Madness* characters). That said, the nearly-completed **Motocross Madness 2** had people clamouring to get on its machines (check out our preview on page 54). **Dungeon Siege**, a fantasy RPG, has some cool features (like a



Clockwise from top left: **MechWarrior 4**, **Dungeon Siege**, **MechCommander 2** and **Loose Cannon**.

packmule for your items, or the ability to hire mercenaries before a battle) and an awesome camera system - with no glitches or loading during movement between indoor and outdoor areas.

Combat Flight Simulator 2: WWII Pacific Theater, looks set to take players 'personal investment' to a new level. To put you 'in the game', your actions will affect future missions. Let your wing-man burn and you'll get a useless rookie on the next one. Oh, and there's 18 new aircraft. Back on the ground, **Loose Cannon**, looked like a hybrid of *Interstate '82* and *Urban Chaos*. Flowing between car-combat and on-foot action, the early build we saw looked promising. Hopefully the massive worlds they are creating will improve on the disappointing *'82*.

Midtown Madness 2 was also on show, but only the San Francisco tracks were finished, with London still to come. **Conquest: Frontier Wars** a space based 2D RTS, didn't make much of a splash, but the slick **Baseball 2001** was shown in near completed form (the baseball season starts in April) and we'll have a review for you as soon as possible. Digital Anvil's **Freelancer** was shown in video form - and looks phenomenal -

but no new information was on offer. Also, three new **Sidewinder** hardware products were on show, one expected, two a little quirky. The **Force Feedback 2** looks set to improve on the original, with internal power supply and over 100 different effects. An RTS-specific controller, the **Strategic Commander** will be welcomed by hardcore users, and the **Game Voice** mic-headset has some cool features - which will no doubt be ignored in favour of verbal taunting.

MechCommander 2, the massively multiplayer **Allegiance**, and the much anticipated **StarLancer** (preview p36) were also shown, as well as the mind-blowing detail of **Links 2001**. Along with a course editor, the 'Virtual Golf Association' was announced, with a \$100,000 prize on offer. Think about that next time you're virtually putting!

At the very end of the main presentation, it was announced that Alex Garden, the creator of **HomeWorld**, is working for Microsoft on a new game. Launching in 2001, it is thought to be a similar title, but no details are available at this early stage, even though we were at the same impromptu 2AM hotel lobby party that he was.

OLD SHOTS!



The World is Not Enough

We're pleased to follow up last month's "exclusive" shot of EA's new 007 game with three more. Like our own, however, these official shots have something of the 'mock-up' about them...



• Genre: Realtime Strategy • Developer: Blizzard • Due: 4th Qtr 2000

Take a good look at these screenshots, dear reader, for they maybe the last evidence of what Warcraft 3 might have been. In their infinite wisdom, Blizzard has decided to redesign the game, steering the ship back into more familiar waters.

Upon its announcement, Warcraft 3 was supposed to forge a bold new genre of gameplay - Roleplaying Strategy. But during the development process, Blizzard felt this combination was creating some potential design and balance problems for the game.

A choice had to be made: continue down the roleplaying path or return to the well-worn realtime strategy avenue that has been the destination of the successful series' previous titles. Inevitably, the latter was chosen.

Warcraft 3 will still focus upon heroes and minimal resource management, but a number of originally abandoned RTS elements will return to the fray. Exactly what this means is something we'll certainly investigate for you in the coming months.

X-Box X-ists

MICROSOFT SHOWS OFF ITS GAMES CONSOLE. FINALLY.

Just seconds after this month's deadline, Bill Gates stood up on a stage at the American Game Developers Conference and announced what everyone already knew. Microsoft has been working on a games console called the X-Box. The raw specs are as follows:
Processor: Intel PIII (at least 600 MHz)
Memory: 64MB RAM (6.4 GB/sec bandwidth)
Graphics: 300 MHz X-Chip from nVidia
Sound: 64 channel chip
Storage: 4x DVD, 8GB HDD, 8MB memory card
Misc: Ethernet port, 4 controllers, HDTV support.

With the architecture of a dedicated games console, these are very impressive features, certainly superior to the current cutting-edge PC system. But hardware alone doesn't guarantee success, software is the key. Which is why Microsoft has signed up the likes of EA, Bungie, Lionhead, Eidos, Capcom, Namco and Konami to produce games for the machine. Next month, we'll have an indepth look at the X-Box, and analyse its strengths and weaknesses in full. Meanwhile, check out these shots from the GDC demo.



NEW HEROES

Shadow of Death is the name of the second expansion pack for Heroes of Might & Magic III. In addition to 38 new scenarios, the lengthy campaign depicts a war against a powerful Necromancer and his mighty undead army. HOMM3 is also expected to be reissued in a bundle featuring both add-ons.

LOCAL FOCUS

A REGULAR SERIES WHERE WE PROFILE ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S GAME DEVELOPMENT STUDIOS AND THEIR CURRENT PROJECT.

Microforte

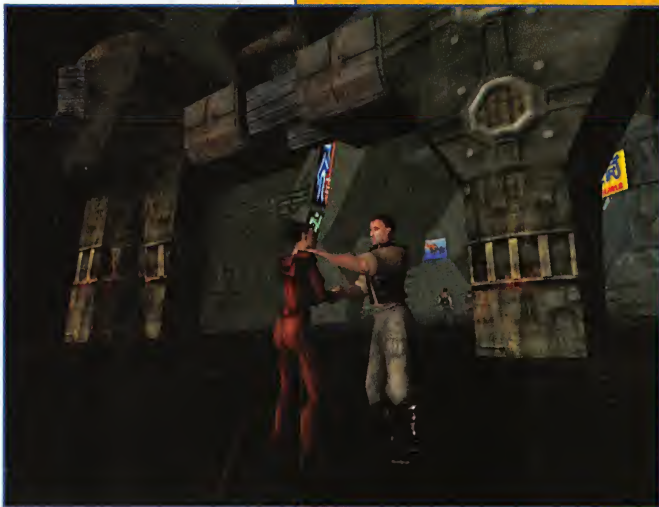
THIS MONTH: MICROFORTE'S **STEVE WANG** REVEALS THEIR FORTHCOMING MASSIVELY MULTIPLAYER ROLEPLAYING GAME, CODENAMED **BIG WORLD**.

PCPP: Big World is typically referred to as a "persistent, online, massively multiplayer, science fiction, roleplaying game, etc, etc..." It's not exactly snappy, is it?

Steve: I guess the buzz word category is MMOG. It is a mouthful and it doesn't describe the content, just the genre. It's difficult to be snappier because of the scope that



"Psst, mate, did you know your chin is stuck to your collar."



it covers. Big World is a Blade-runner style world of action and adventure with thousands of players.

PCPP: What kind of balance between combat and character interaction can we expect?

Steve: There is no doubt that combat is important, and players will be able to learn and improve on combat skills and weapons. We also have a strong goal to provide a safe environment for players who

want to focus on peaceful forms of character interaction. The social system has a structure that allows for players to take more socially active roles.

PCPP: How heavily does Big World rely on character statistics?

Steve: Behind each individual character are values that define the character in terms of his or her strength and so on. What we don't want to do is have a game that is driven by statistics alone. In the real world we can choose to alter our initial statistics to some degree - for example we can study to become more intelligent or work out at the gym to become stronger. In other games when a character is created, a new player is asked to make lots of decisions that will effect what he can ultimately do, when he doesn't know all the rules

nor all the consequences. We are trying to create a system that has some flexibility here so you are able to refine your character after the initial character creation. The design goals for our skill system are for a balance between player skill and character skills. Character skills are definitely important for character progression and rewards. Player skill is still needed to achieve the best results.

PCPP: Can you sum up your goal for Big World in just one sentence?

Steve: I'll give it a go... To create a game world that offers thousands of players the opportunity to socialise, explore interactive environments and to use their wits and the hard won skills of their characters to achieve fame, respect and power in an original, rich and dynamic universe.

AUSTRALIA'S MOST WANTED

After four long months, Team Fortress 2 has been toppled from its throne. We suspect the endless delays (with a release now rumoured to be closer to the end of the year) have cooled your anticipation in favour of more imminent titles. Which makes it all the more surprising that you've chosen Diablo 2 as a successor. We had been hoping to bring you a report on the beta test this month, but then - shock! - that was delayed, too. You are an optimistic lot, aren't you?

Send your Top Five Most Wanted Games to: wanted@pcpowerplay.next.com.au



This month's winner, **Phil Sullivan from Sylvania, NSW**, penned his entry in the shape of several haiku poems. And for that he wins a copy of Deus Ex, which he voted numero uno.

1	DIABLO 2	◀
2	Team Fortress 2	◀
3	Warcraft 3	◀
4	Deus Ex	◀
5	Duke Nukem Forever	◀
6	Baldur's Gate 2	◀
7	Halo	◀
8	Thief 2	◀
9	Grand Prix 3	◀
10	Black & White	◀

See you later, Sid

ALPHA CENTAURI
DESIGNER QUILTS FIRAXIS

The future of the much-awaited third title in the Civilization series has been thrown into doubt this month following the resignation of Brian Reynolds from Firaxis.

Reynolds, who co-founded the experienced team with Sid Meier and headed up the development of Alpha Centauri, was the project lead on Civilization III until early this year. While neither Firaxis nor Reynolds himself would comment, it is believed the split wasn't entirely amicable. Reynolds has left to form Big Huge Games and has begun work on a real-time strategy game. According to a Firaxis spokesperson, Sid Meier has assumed the mantle of overseeing Civilization III through to completion. There is currently no scheduled release date for the game.



A Broken Home

NEW HOMEWORLD MISSIONS PUT AN END TO DOMESTIC BLISS

If there were one possible criticism you could make of Relic's otherwise flawless strategy game Homeworld, it would be based around its length - or lack of it. As gripping and intense as they undoubtedly were, the fact that the scripted missions numbered only sixteen meant those final scenes arrived all too quickly. As much as we all wanted to return home, it would have been nice to spend a bit more time lost in space.

Well, now you can. Courtesy of Barking Dog Studios comes the first Homeworld expansion, entitled Cataclysm. Only it's more than an addon, Cataclysm is a stand-alone title, meaning you don't need the original game to play. Owners of Homeworld will obviously be able to gain a discount on their purchase, of course. The events depicted in Cataclysm occur some hundred years after the successful journey back to Hiigara and, via an impressive eighteen missions, detail the emergence of a new threat to existence - The Beast. Enhanced features such as waypoints and more advanced technology should add to the strategy on offer.

FLYING HIGH

Fly!, the annoyingly punctuated but damn fine flight sim of late last year has been granted a sequel. The chronologically-correct Fly! 2000 will sport a cargo deck of new features, including realtime voice chat support via Roger Wilco, and will touchdown in two versions - a stand-alone release and an upgrade for Fly! owners.

FIRST LOOK!

Alone in the Dark IV

• Genre: Survival Horror • Developer: Darkworks • Due: 4th Qtr 2000

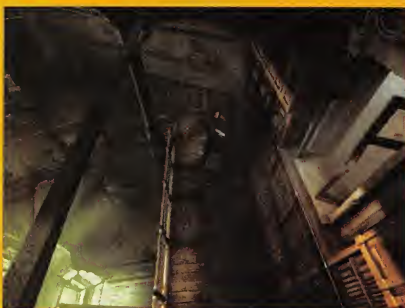
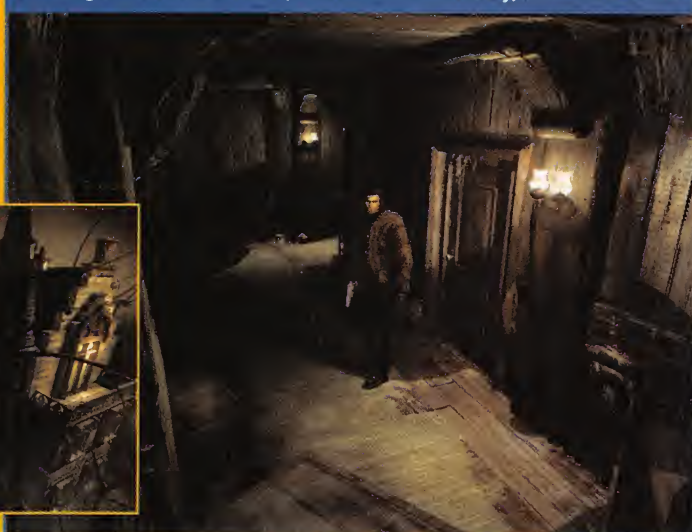
It's known as "survival horror", the now well-worn genre of shadowy suspense, desperate combat against unnatural beasts, and quite ridiculous - but cool - camera angles. Lurking in its grim, dank corners you'll discover the likes of Nocturne, Ecstatica, and their rather more successful console counterparts Resident Evil and Silent Hill. These are games you want to meet on a dark night because being absolutely shit-scared is all part of the fun.

In 1992 legendary French developer Frederik Raynal and his team at Infogrames unwittingly began it all with Alone In The Dark. At the time it was a sublime marriage of cutting-edge polygon technology and exquisitely detailed locations. Now, its pacing and set-pieces still remain frightening enough to send a shiver or two up your spine.

All of which augurs well for Darkworks' fourth iteration of the series due before the end of the year. Surprisingly, the action still takes place against static pre-rendered backdrops. Though the emphasis on lighting (both for effect and as a gameplay tool - hero Edward Carnby's most valued possession is his torch) seems certain to ensure a suitably threatening and chilling atmosphere.



But, hang on, he's neither alone (or else it wouldn't be scary) nor in the dark. Tsk!



RANT!

SOMETIMES THERE JUST ISN'T ENOUGH ROOM FOR ALL OUR OPINIONS

Accuracy or Atmosphere?

Give me atmosphere over accuracy every time! There's no doubt that computer games are the closest most of us will ever get to flying a modern jet, commanding a main battle tank, or taking the helm of a nuclear submarine. Even fewer will ever be called upon to neutralise terrorists aboard a 747. But a great game captures the essence of those experiences, rather than flawlessly recreating the actual environment. Atmosphere's the thing. Great atmosphere is the difference between the unbearable tension of an Aces of the Deep, and the sterile perfection of a Silent Hunter; between the nerve-racking excitement of a MiG Alley, and the clinical precision of a USAF. It's one of the things that makes Rogue Spear a great game, and Spec Ops II pretty average. Atmosphere brings us back for more in a way that realism alone never could.

Getting the balance right is a tough call for game developers, particularly in modern simulations. If realism rules, then launching a radar guided missile towards a target is not particularly exciting. Travelling at Mach 2 in a piece of aluminium probably adds to the tension for a real pilot, but developers have to capture the feel of the thing with a joystick, a 17 inch screen, and a couple of speakers. So atmosphere is often down to a fast pace, great graphics and great sound.

As gaming technology improves, things may change. When I can sit at my desk and pull 6 Gs, I'll say concentrate on the automated defensive suite. When I can feel the rounds strike the side of my tank, or the temperature rise as the ammo burns, I'll say go for an accurate transmission system. Developers must try for a balance, but in the mean time give me fantastic explosions, plenty of action, and loud music!

Major Des McNicholas

Cavedog Collapses

GT CUT BACKS SENDS STUDIO TO THE POUND

The full effects of GT Interactive's financial troubles - and subsequent takeover by Infogrames - has now hit. Cavedog Studios, the mastermind behind the pivotal realtime strategy title, Total Annihilation, has closed its doors. This follows on from the news last month that one Cavedog project, firstperson shooter Amen: The Awakening, had been cancelled. At this stage it is not known

whether the studio has shut down for good or if it is to be assimilated by either GT or Infogrames. Work on Cavedog's online project, Boneyards, and two anticipated titles, Ron Gilbert's Good & Evil and the TA: Kingdoms expansion pack, The Iron Plague, is still progressing. But their future (and that of Total Annihilation 2) remains in the hands of Infogrames.



FIRST LOOK!

Shadows of Reality

• Genre: Action/RPG • Developer: Nevolution • Due: 2001

And if you like the look of Deus Ex, then you'd do well to cast a glance or two in the direction of this as well. In the world of gross generalisations, Shadows of Reality would be considered a System Shock 2 clone. In the world of PCPP, it's instead viewed as an extremely promising looking game.

Though clearly still in the very early stages of development - these mock-up images do no more than

simply set the mood - Nevolution's first title is nonetheless impressively ambitious. Originally conceived as a massively multiplayer, persistent world affair, SoR has rather strangely evolved into a narrative-driven firstperson action game. With roleplaying elements, of course. A comprehensive skill system will feature alongside rich character interaction. You might also get to take a trip into cyberspace.

In the future, streetlight manufacturers won't be short of business.



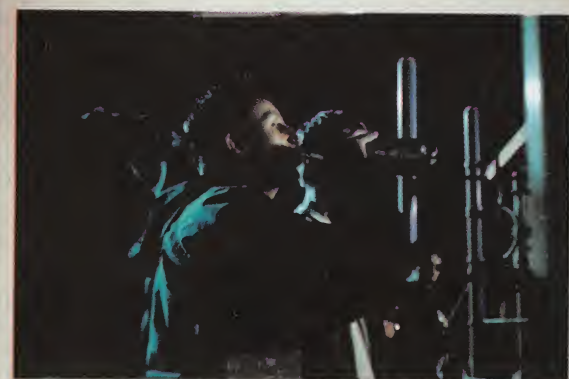
Team Tactics

SWAT 3 FINDS SOME FRIENDS AT LAST

Multiplayer is in!



The only advantage Sierra's superb SWAT 3 surrendered to rival Rogue Spear upon its release was a lack of multiplayer features. By the end of the year, this flaw will have been eliminated thanks to the cleverly titled Battle Plan add-on. Three multiplayer modes are promised for either LAN or internet play: co-operative (with players as just one man on a team), competition (leading a team against a human opponent) and deathmatch (self-explanatory). Completing the package is a series of six missions set in Los Angeles and a clutch of editing tools. Existing SWAT 3 owners will be able to download the multiplayer modes, while the expansion pack will be available at retail later this year.



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LIONHEAD CUBS

The debut games from Lionhead's recently established third-party development teams have been christened. Big Blue Box are working on Demigod, while Intrepid's title is to be called B.C. Both games will utilise the Black & White engine.

FIRST LOOK!

F1 2000

• Genre: Racing Sim • Developer: EA Sports • Due: 2nd Qtr 2000

Well, this one really caught us by surprise. Of course, everyone knew GP3 was coming, and there are always several Formula One sims released each year, but it was certainly a shock to discover that EA had one up their sleeve as well. What won't come as a shock, though is its title; they have a formula and they're sticking to it. Take the name of the sport and add the year at the end. Simple. Here's F1 2000, then.

Yet, despite the new millennial tag, F1 2000 is actually based upon the 1999 World Championship. For those concerned about such matters, this means no American GP, Irvine in a Ferrari, Barrichello in a Stewart, etc. The official FIA license is in place, ensuring everything is as authentic as possible, while a rare splitscreen two-player mode will delight multiplayer fans without network access.

F1 2000 was scheduled to ship in time for the second race of this season, so you can look forward to reading our review next month.



The sponsor will be happy with this shot.

WOLF3D RETURNS

The much-rumoured - and now confirmed - remake of Wolfenstein 3D is to be developed by Gray Matter Studios (formerly known as Xatrix, the guys behind Kingpin), use the Quake 3 engine and will be titled Return to Castle Wolfenstein. Activision have rather unsurprisingly snapped up the publishing rights.

Particle Physics

IT'S FRENCH AND IT'S WEIRD - QUELLE SURPRISE

Fresh from completing the surreal mix of fantasy and science fiction and plain strangeness that was the brilliant Omikron: The Nomad Soul, French developer Quantic Dream has begun work on its second title. But it's not the Omikron sequel we were all expecting. Instead it's an action/adventure going by the name of Quark.

Two parallel universes constitute the game's locations: one is a fairytale fantasy land bursting with magic, colour and cuteness; the other is a grimmer, more sombre modern day world. You can understand why London was chosen as the setting for the latter. Like Omikron, Quark will be a realtime 3D game - and, in fact, will use an enhanced version of the same engine. However, these early sketches and images would seem to suggest it won't see release until next year.



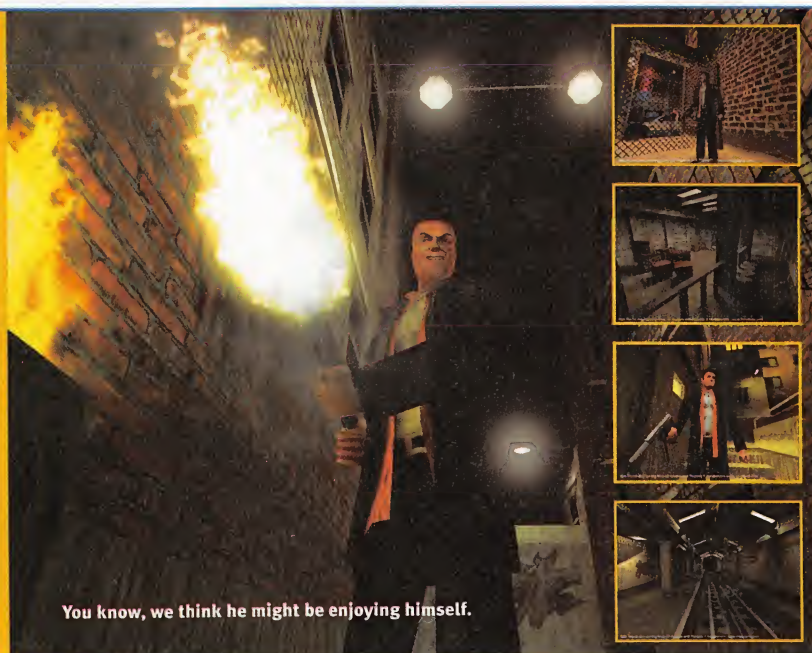
NEW SHOTS!

Max Payne

• Genre: Cinematic Action • Developer: Remedy/3D Realms • Due: No Idea

Everyone seems to have heard of Max Payne, but no one really seems to know much more than that. Yes, it's an action game; yes, it appears to pilfer wholesale from The Matrix and several John Woo flicks - the trenchcoat and dual-handed gunplay are dead giveaways. Besides that, though, there's a distinct uncertainty with regards to how the game plays or even what it's actually about.

What's really capturing our attention is the inventive use of the camera. Combining the typical over-the-shoulder thirdperson perspective with frequent stylish, cinematic cutaways while still maintaining a playable game was always going to be a challenge for Remedy. If they can pull it off, though, Max Payne's anti-drug crusade could be hugely entertaining.



You know, we think he might be enjoying himself.



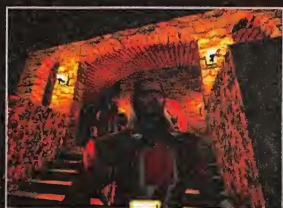
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Download the playable demo at www.eidos.com



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EIDOS
INTERACTIVE

...THE PERFECT CRIME?



HEURISTIC RPG

D.W. Bradley's firstperson RPG *Swords & Sorcery* has found a new publisher and a new name. Titled *Wizards & Warriors*, Activision will now publish the game developed by Bradley's Heuristic Park (also responsible for *Wizardry V-VII*). *Wizards & Warriors* is generating huge interest with its character generation options - allowing players to choose from 11 different clans (or species) - including Oomphaz (elephant men) and Lizzords (er, lizard men).

FIRST LOOK!

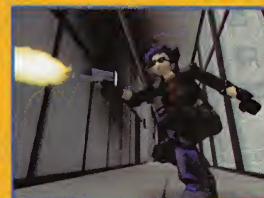
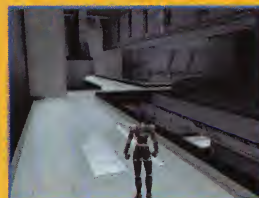
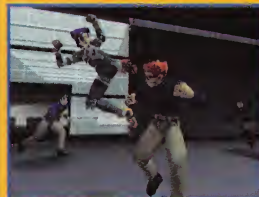
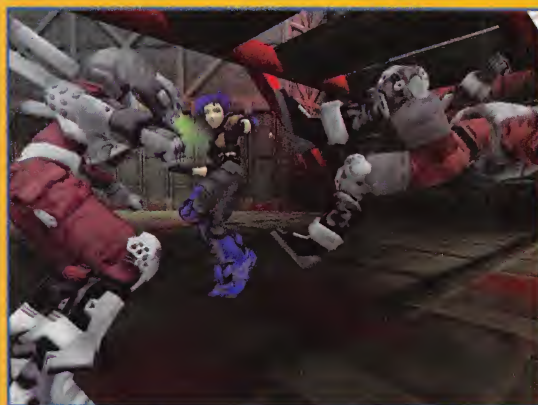
Oni

• Genre: Anime Action • Developer: Bungie
• Due: 4th Qtr 2000

While Bungie may be most famous for its realtime strategy smash *Myth*, Bungie's lineage is made up almost entirely of action games. With the impressive *Halo*, and now *Oni*, Bungie is making a definite returning to its roots.

Oni has been described as a "3D full-contact action-combat" game with a strong anime flavour. While weapons will feature, *Oni*'s focus will be on hand-to-hand combat, with a slew of special moves and actions pinched from console fighting games.

Bungie has opted for the "over the shoulder" thirdperson perspective, having come up with a solution for the problems that have commonly plagued character control using this method. Firstly, *Oni*'s lead character Konoko can be manipulated using the pleasing FPS mouse and keyboard combination. Secondly, through the use of interpolation (where textures and movements are blended into each other), actions executed by the player will be instantaneous. This is in stark contrast to other thirdperson action titles, where one animation must be completed before a new one can begin - explaining the stuttered gameplay in such titles.



The Matrix: its affect on games will be felt for years to come.

Network Next Arrives

PCPP GOES ONLINE, IF NOT EXACTLY ON TIME

TOMB RAIDER: THE MOVIE

Following the announcement of the lucky actress that'll bring Lara Croft to the big screen (go on then, turn to page 126), Eidos have leaked plans to release a fifth Tomb Raider game in time for Christmas. Titled "Tomb Raider: The Movie", the game will follow closely the exploits of the film. With the film planned for release mid next year and Eidos earlier stating that they wouldn't release a game version of the flick before its premiere, the targeted Xmas launch seems a tad unlikely. More news as it breaks.

After many years of waiting (and a bit of a false start last month), it's finally here. That's right folks, the gaming goodness of PC PowerPlay is finally online. As part of Network Next (www.networknext.com) you'll be able to access PC gaming info like never before...

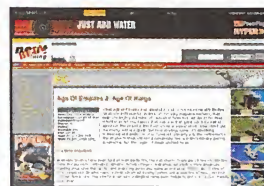
Ok, so this is really a shameless plug for our own site, but if you try it out we think you'll be impressed. With unprecedented web coverage of computer and console gaming, IT and internet, music and film and TV, you can now access the best of your favourite magazines from your PC. With content and editorial talent from many of your favourite mags, like PC PowerPlay, Rolling Stone and internet.au, NetworkNEXT isn't one of these flashy sites with no content that have you bored stupid after five minutes. As well as a

wealth of content, NetworkNEXT also offers discussion forums on a huge range of topics, allowing you to participate and interact with others in the gaming community.

And best of all, we have what looks set to be Australia's largest download site for software and games - powered by ondemand.com. Finally, somewhere local for fast downloads of demos, patches, utils, and everything else you can think of!

So, whether you're after the latest game demos, discussion boards, hot polls and comps, live chats with developers across the globe or the latest news and reviews from the world of gaming, NetworkNEXT's channels are the best online source for whatever you're into! Check it out today at www.networknext.com

next
gaming



Although it's only in beta stage, check it out and see what you think

COMING SOON

PCPP'S ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO WHAT YOU'LL BE PLAYING IN THE MONTHS AHEAD. JUST MAKE SURE YOU'VE GOT THE GRAIN OF SALT READY, OKAY?

APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AND BEYOND...	WHO KNOWS?
Force Commander (Lucasarts) MDK 2 (Interplay) Soldier of Fortune (Activision) Thief 2: The Metal Age (Eidos) Vampire: The Masquerade - Redemption (Activision)	Daikatana (Eidos) Deus Ex (Eidos) Dirt Track Racing (???) Grand Prix 3 (Hasbro) Icewind Dale (Interplay)	Anachronox (Eidos) B-17 2: The Mighty Eighth (Hasbro) Colin McRae Rally 2 (Eidos) Diablo 2 (Sierra) Starlancer (Microsoft)	Black & White (Electronic Arts) Dark Reign 2 (Activision) Giants: Citizen Kabuto (Interplay) Motocross Madness 2 (Microsoft) Rune (G.O.D.)	Baldur's Gate 2: Shadows of Amn (Interplay) Commandos 2 (Eidos) Dark Forces: Obi-Wan (Lucasarts) Duke Nukem Forever (GT Interactive) Halo (Bungie)	C&C: Renegade (Electronic Arts) Freelancer (Microsoft) Team Fortress 2 (Sierra) Tribes 2 (Sierra) Warcraft 3 (Sierra) X-Com: Alliance (Hasbro)

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net.game.news



Conquest Online: where **Magic: The Gathering** meets **Star Trek: The Next Generation**.

Boldly going multiplayer

ACTIVISION REVEALS TWO ONLINE-ONLY **STAR TREK** GAMES

www.activision.com

For now the fog has cleared regarding the future direction of online gaming specialist Verant Interactive. Rumours emerged late last year that suggested the creators of Everquest were developing a massively multiplayer Star Wars title. As it turns out, this wasn't far off the mark.

Activision has recently announced its intention to publish a massively multiplayer game based on the Star Trek universe. Guess who's signed up to develop it? Verant, of course. Although gameplay details are still up in the air, Activision has already formulated the game's pricing structure. Anticipating close to half a million subscribers, the publisher will charge players a monthly US\$10 fee after the expected launch in 2002. It won't be

restricted to PC gamers either; you'll be donning virtual Starfleet uniforms with Dreamcast and Playstation2 owners across the globe.

Trekkies who need their multiplayer fix to arrive a little bit earlier will have to be satisfied with Conquest Online. As the name implies, this is also very much a net-only affair. Conquest allows each player to adopt the role of Q, the enigmatic and omnipotent tormentor of Jean-Luc Picard throughout the Next Generation. Created by Genetic Anomalies, best known for online "virtual card" games like ChronX, Conquest has players using and trading cards while vying for control of the universe. It's not a persistent world, though, more a sci-fi take on the Magic: The Gathering formula. Activision has advised us to assemble an away team for Conquest in May.



10Six

THE FIRST **MILLION** PLAYER
ONLINE GAME BEGINS

www.10six.com

The reliable seers at Segasoft predict that in the future a new planet, Visitor, will enter the solar system. In response, the four megacorporations who control the world at the time decide to recruit pioneer miners to colonise the planet and strip it of its rich seams of Transium, a recently discovered and highly desirable mineral. Players take on the role of a miner, competing against each other to establish bases and protect their own interests. But it's not all greed and selfishness, to achieve any sort of success it will be necessary to forge alliances through the Mutual Defence Network. This is vital because the gameworld is persistent, meaning your base is still operative even when you're not logged on and playing. At such times, its protection is in the (hopefully safe) hands of your allies. It's with this firm emphasis on co-operation that Segasoft hopes to maintain longterm interest in the game. The building of strong communities is how most games sustain themselves, especially online, so it seems they could well be on track.

The name's not really all that strange, actually. Think of it instead of 10 to the power of six, which is just another way of saying one million. Which, in addition, is the theoretical number of players able to play the game. 10Six had just finished its beta test at the time of writing and with any luck should now be up and running at HEAT.NET. We'll let you know if and when it gains a retail release in Australia.



Hugh Norton-Smith says it rocks. But then, it is all about mining.

MM... SPACE

merchant.shareplay.com

Those purveyors of fine shareware, SharePlay, have released the first version of Space Merchant, a massively multiplayer strategy game that incorporates much trading, exploring and fighting. Visually simplistic, but with thousands of players it should be worth a look.



Entering Lithworld

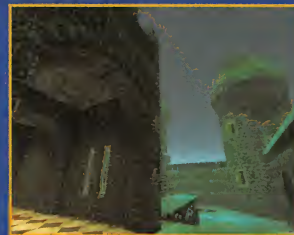
MONOLITH'S MASSIVELY-MULTIPLAYER GAME ENGINE www.10six.com

The licensing of another company's game engine has proved a boon for many of today's leading developers. Valve's use of the Quake 2 engine to create Half-Life is the prime example of the success of this tactic. Thus far though, the practice has only involved single or small-scale multiplayer games. Monolith are about to take the next logical step with the development of LithTech Online, the first engine built specifically to be licensed for massively-multiplayer games. LithTech Online is technology dedicated to the creation of persistent online worlds, or LithWorlds as they will be known.

In related news, Black Isle Studios and New World Computing have licensed the standard LithTech engine for future projects, presumed to be Fallout 3 and Might & Magic IX respectively. Both companies are rumoured to also have massively-multiplayer RPGs in the works, which suggests their relations with Monolith could develop even further.



These images are from a test demo of the LithTech 2 engine. It's exciting to think what Black Isle could do with this power.



Den of Thieves

LOOKING GLASS CONFIRMS THIEF MULTIPLAYER TITLE



www.lglass.com

When we spoke to Looking Glass Studios' Steve Pearsall last month concerning Thief II: The Metal Age, we managed to sneak a couple of questions about a possible multiplayer Thief game past his otherwise vigilant guard.

If you had been eavesdropping at the time, here's what you would have heard:

PCPP: When Thief 2 was first announced there was mention of implementing some sort of multiplayer capability. Recently, though, it appears to have been dropped. What was the reason for this decision?

Steve: The primary reason is that once we started seriously thinking about multiplayer for Thief, we realised that we had an opportunity to come up with some interesting new gameplay that we hope will be as unique as the single player gameplay in Thief. Unfortunately, given the schedule pressures we are under, we knew that we didn't have time to explore and tune the multiplayer gameplay possibilities without sacrificing some tuning and polish on the single player game. So we decided to concentrate on building a triple A single player game, and then turn our focus to a triple A multiplayer game.



This Thief 2 pic shows Garrett looking at himself with his mechanical eye. It seemed appropriate.

PCPP: Aha! So you are presently considering the possibility of a multiplayer Thief title in the future. Can you shed any light on how this might actually work?

Steve: We have fifteen or so multiplayer gameplay concepts that we are currently prototyping and I think we will end up with a hybrid resulting from combining elements from several of them. I can't say exactly what that will look like. There will likely be both a co-op style as well as some sort of competitive style gameplay in different missions.

PCPP: Hang on, I think someone's spotted us...

NGN Poll

Email your responses to ngn@pcpowerplay.next.com.au, with "NGN Poll" in the subject line. Results to be published in #50.

Sorry! Forces beyond our control meant there was no room for the NGN Poll this month. Never fear, though, normal service will be resumed next issue.

NGN TOP 5 ONLINE GAMES

1. Unreal Tournament
2. Quake III Arena
3. Half-Life
4. Starsiege Tribes
5. Ultima Online

Send your votes to ngn@pcpowerplay.com.au

PREVIOUSLY ON

www.digital-tome.com

Here's a novel idea! Digital Tome's Siege of Avalon is a "computer game novel", the chapters of which will be released at two week intervals and each promises a good 20 hours playing time. The first will be free and is due in late April.



REAL TIME STRATEGY IN THE FINAL FRONTIER.



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Windows 2000

GAMING PLATFORM OR JUST **BACK TO BUSINESS?**

Microsoft has finally released the long-awaited sequel to Windows NT 4.0. Once known as Windows NT 5.0, the next version of Windows NT has gone through considerable changes since its initial beta release. Windows 2000 was originally supposed to be the operating system that would unite business users with home users, in that instead of two operating systems uneasily coexisting - Windows 9x and Windows NT - there would be just one unified OS. With the release of Windows 2000 came the acknowledgment that this ideal has changed somewhat.

Microsoft announced that Windows 98 Second Edition would be the last in the line of hybrid 16/32bit operating systems to be released. Although this has changed with the announcement that a version of Windows known as Millennium will be the last. Windows Millennium will hopefully provide a more stable environment and offer support for some of the newer devices, while keeping the incredible compatibility that the 16/32 bit Windows variants have enjoyed. We will hopefully have a preview of Millennium in a future issue.

Fat professionals

Windows 2000 Professional is the Windows NT 4.0 workstation equivalent. There are three other versions of Windows 2000 but they are all aimed squarely at the server market. So, let's see what it's like.

The installation of Windows 2000 Professional went without a

hitch; all plug and play devices that were in the system were recognised and ran without needing any driver updates. This will please many Windows NT users as NT had very rudimentary support for such devices.

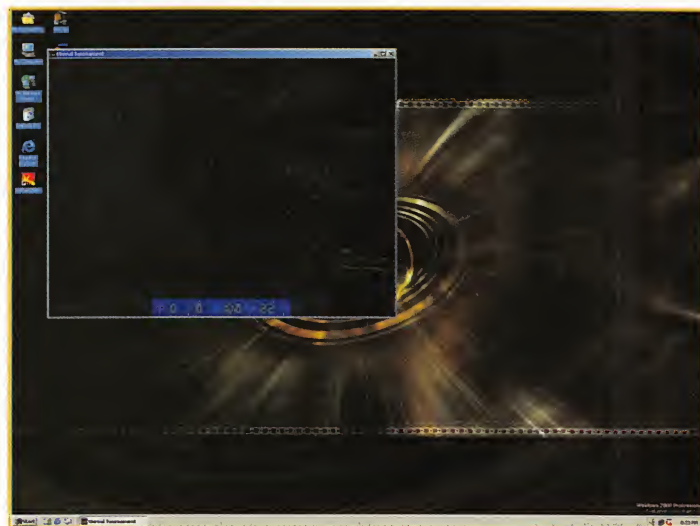
Previous users of Windows NT will also be pleased to know that Windows 2000 can now read the superior FAT32 type partitions. This used to be the bane of many a Windows 98 user, in that if Windows 98 was installed to a FAT32 partition you could pretty much kiss goodbye the idea of dual booting into Windows NT without purchasing some sort of boot manager software.

That said, Windows 98 still cannot read NTFS partitions without the aid of a third party application, so I would advise against using a NTFS partition when installing Windows 2000. This effectively means that the file system security that Windows 2000 provides is not available, but for most gamers this won't be such a problem.

What no acceleration?

One of the first things that really struck us about Windows 2000 is the fact that, at the time of writing, W2K has very little 3D hardware acceleration support. We even downloaded the latest reference drivers for the TNT2 card that was installed in the test system, but this didn't seem to help at all.

There is some very basic DirectX 3D acceleration that allowed us to run Unreal Tournament, but try as



Windows 2000 running Unreal Tournament using the W2K drivers from Nvidia.

we might we could not get the game to run in fullscreen mode. The frame rate also left a lot to be desired; it made UT's software mode look good in comparison.

The biggest shock was the fact that the Windows 2000 TNT2 drivers have no OpenGL acceleration at all. Quake III: Arena failed to run, likewise Unreal Tournament in OpenGL mode. This is quite a surprise considering Windows NT 4.0 has been able to run OpenGL accelerated games for quite some time.

We believe the DirectX3D acceleration situation will change as newer driver revisions are released, but why OpenGL acceleration was omitted in the first driver revisions is beyond us.

The waiting game

In our opinion Windows 2000 is a very polished operating system. It is very stable and we did not experience even one single crash while testing. The performance was also very snappy, even on our relatively lowly 300MHz Pentium II test platform. Intel CEO Andy Grove was recently quoted as saying that Windows 2000 would require 250MHz of extra processing power. Of course, being the CEO of a major processor manufacturer you would expect him to say that. Nonetheless, I would not recommend using Windows 2000 on a Pentium 60, but at least a 300MHz Pentium II with 64MB of RAM seems to cope

OPEN GL - The NT Connection

We are all avid Quake players at PCPP and were really bummed out about W2K's lack of OpenGL acceleration. So out of curiosity we wondered what would happen if we tried installing the TNT2 NT 4.0 reference drivers. To our surprise they installed without a hitch and Quake 3 started up without a problem. This raises the question as to why the W2K drivers were released without OpenGL support, when they obviously are very similar to the NT version.

While we had Quake 3 running we decided to run a couple of timedemos benchmarks to see what sort of speed W2K can muster. Remember these drivers are NT 4.0 versions, so they don't actually support DirectX 7 or 3D hardware acceleration using DirectX3D at all. As you can see, at lower resolutions W2K actually leads slightly, so there maybe hope for W2K after all.

Quake 3: Arena (demo001.dm3)	Windows 2000	Windows 98
High Quality	34.6	34.6
Normal	43.6	43.3
Fastest	50.3	49.4

TEST SYSTEM

- PII 400MHz
- 128MB PC-100 SDRAM
- Diamond Viper V770 TNT2
- 16MB AGP using Nvidia
- Detonator reference driver's version 3.68
- TerraSound 64 PCI soundcard



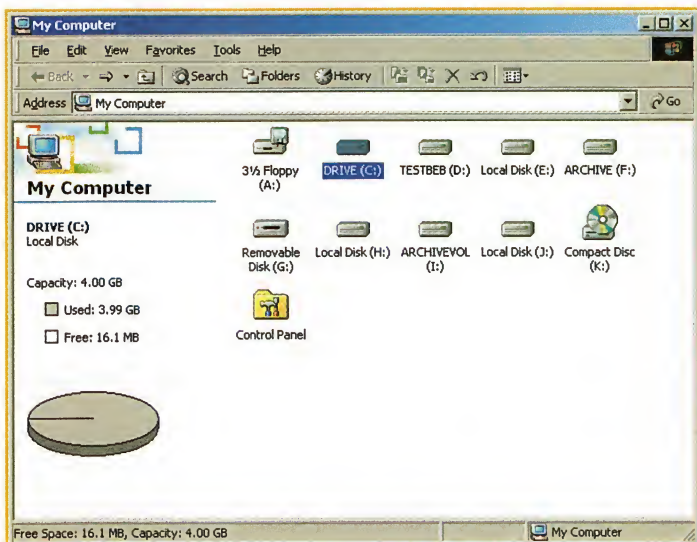
CHARTS



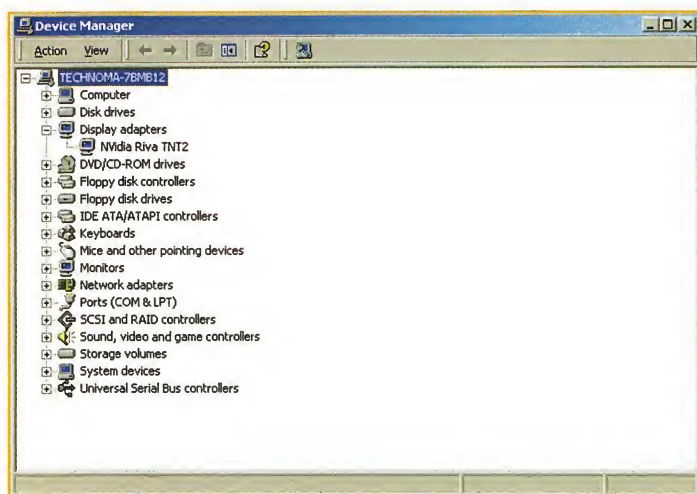
Charts supplied by
Electronics Boutique

THIS MONTH WEEKS IN GAME/PUBLISHER

1	3	THE SIMS MAXIS
2	18	AGE OF EMPIRES 2 MICROSOFT
3	6	HALF-LIFE: ADRENALIN PACK SIERRA
4	12	HALF-LIFE: OPPOSING FORCE SIERRA
5	4	CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 99/00 EIDOS
6	1	MECHWARRIOR 3 ADD-ON PACK MICROPROSE
7	4	ULTIMA ONLINE DISCOVERY EDITION ELECTRONIC ARTS
8	8	PLANESCAPE: TORMENT INTERPLAY
9	1	NOX WESTWOOD
10	14	BALDUR'S GATE COLLECTION INTERPLAY PRODUCTIONS
11	12	SWAT 3 SIERRA
12	11	QUAKE 3: ARENA ACTIVISION
13	12	UNREAL TOURNAMENT GT INTERACTIVE
14	13	PHARAOH SIERRA
15	1	AGE OF WONDERS TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE
16	14	DELTA FORCE 2 ELECTRONIC ARTS
17	7	X: BEYOND THE FRONTIER THQ
18	18	ROGUE SPEAR RED STORM
19	17	LINKS LS 2000 MICROSOFT
20	26	C&C TIBERIAN SUN WESTWOOD



The new look My Computer. Hmm, not much changed there then.



Windows 2000's Device Manager is a major improvement over NT's

very nicely. The sweet spot with Windows 2000 seems to be a 400MHz processor and a minimum 128MB RAM.

At the present time I would advise all gamers to hold off until driver manufacturers start to release fully accelerated drivers, and even then I would wait for benchmark figures before upgrading. If you do use your PC for other activities other than gaming, then Windows 2000 is a definite step in the right direction. Windows 2000 is certainly not the gaming nirvana we were hoping it would be, maybe DirectX 8.0 and some better video drivers will solve this glaring problem, but only time will tell.

Garry Wallis

SPECS

The minimum system requirements to run Windows 2000 Professional.

■ Processor type:

133MHz or higher Pentium-compatible CPU

■ Memory size:

64MB minimum (4GB RAM maximum)

■ Hard Disk size:

2GB HDD with a minimum of 650MB of free space

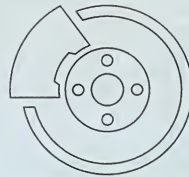
■ Video minimum:

SVGA compatible display adaptor

■ Win2K Pro supports single and dual CPU systems, which would be ideal for Quake III - pity about the OpenGL situation.

Grand Prix 3

ON THE EVE OF THE FORMULA 1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP 2000 SEASON (WHICH BEGAN ITS WORLD TOUR AT OUR VERY OWN ALBERT PARK, MELBOURNE IN MARCH) TEAM PCPP - REPRESENTED BY STALWART **MARCH STEPNIK** AND HOTSHOT **EDWARD FOX** - MET UP WITH PRODUCER **NICK COURT** AT THE MICROPROSE TESTING FACILITIES IN SYDNEY TO GET A FEW PRACTICE LAPS IN BEFORE THE BIG EVENT...



***** The big event, of course, being the release of Grand Prix 3. Come winter this year, a massive contingency of the PC racing community - if not the gaming community in general - will converge upon gaming stores all over the world to snap up their copy of this highly coveted piece of gaming code.

Highly coveted, because Grand Prix 3 is promising to be the most detailed and accurate Formula 1 simulation ever created. It's also

the sequel to Grand Prix 2 - a game released in 1996 which to this day is still considered the best Formula 1 racing game of all time. The attention to detail in GP2 - particularly the car's physics - as well as the massive array of features and a healthy helping of gameplay par-excellence paved the way for a huge following. A following which has yet to lose much of its momentum - just visit www.grandprix2.com for further proof. Even Formula 1 Grand Prix,

the first game in the series, continues to enjoy an impressive following almost a decade after its debut in the gaming world. With two exceptional titles in the series and the third almost here, it's hardly surprising that people are getting a tad impatient.

But it's not just the game itself which has propelled the series to legendary status - the game's creator, Geoff Crammond, is practically worshipped by racing enthusiasts. Called a gaming god

by his peers, Geoff first displayed his technical aptitude with Super Invaders, a high-resolution version of this infamous shooter released back at the dawn of computer gaming age as we know it - in 1981. From there he spent the rest of the eighties developing two racing sims (Revs - 1984, Stunt Car Racer - 1989) as well as The Sentinel in 1986. The Grand Prix series was launched in 1991 with F1 Grand Prix, with Grand Prix 2 following in 1996.





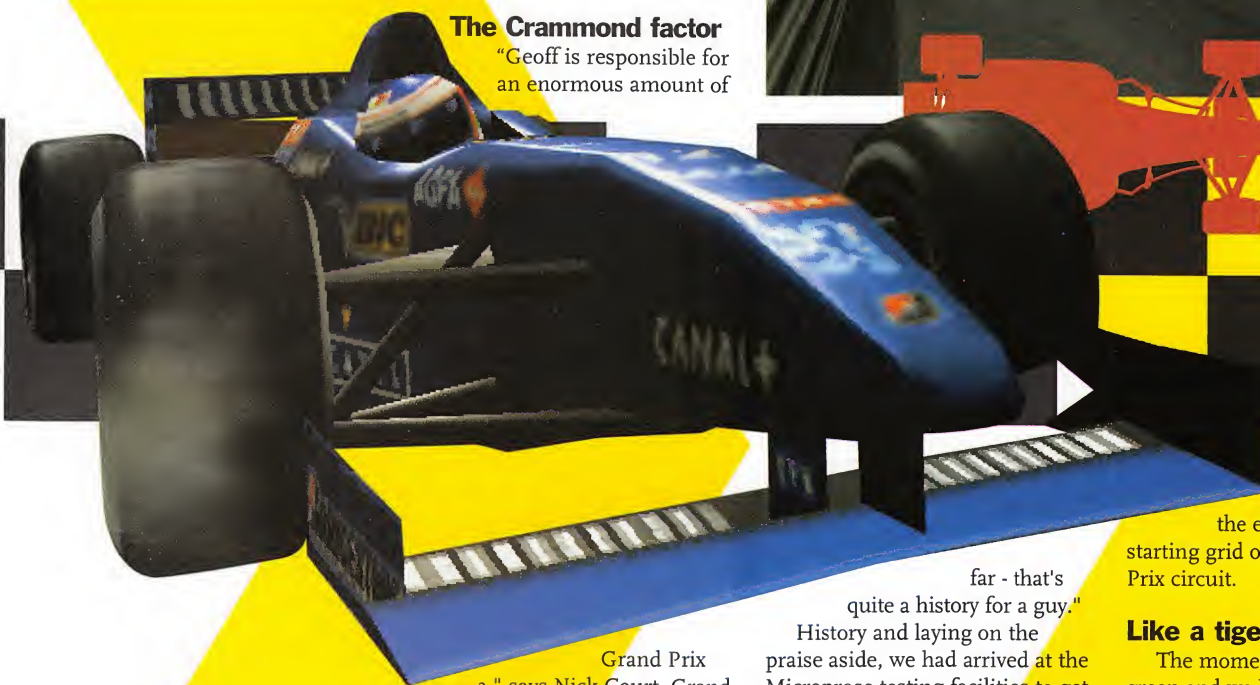
Grand Prix 3 should appeal to a broad spectrum of racing enthusiasts. On easier the difficult settings, overtaking another car shouldn't be too difficult. On the hardest, you'll have to time the break just right.

Following a three month holiday after GP2's release, Geoff threw himself into Grand Prix 3.

What makes his background all the more impressive is the fact that these games (with the exception of the Grand Prix series) were designed and programmed by the man, by himself. Geoff is renowned for being a bit of a control freak, shouldering almost all of the responsibilities that come with developing a game, utilising outside help only where necessary. A gaming god indeed.

The Crammond factor

"Geoff is responsible for an enormous amount of



Grand Prix 3," says Nick Court, Grand Prix 3's producer. "You've got to remember that on Gp1 and Gp2 he worked as the head of a four man team, and the majority of the code was his own. One guy worked on the menus, one guy was the test-driver, and the other created all the tracks.

"That was how GP3 was being developed until '99. Because of the sheer workload Geoff had in front of him, we came to an agreement that we'd separate the development. We want to make GP3 the best Formula 1 simulation ever. So now he's looking after certain bits of the game - primarily the physics and software side of things, whereas our part of the team is working on making it all hardware accelerated.

"That said, Geoff is still very much in control of development and he's done a colossal amount of work on it, because at the end of the day GP3 is his game. The guy is basically a gaming god, and he knows what should be in the game, so we like to listen to him. Out of all the products he's developed, I don't think he's created any crap so



anxious curiosity that we've reved up the engines on the starting grid of the Monaco Grand Prix circuit.

far - that's quite a history for a guy."

History and laying on the praise aside, we had arrived at the Microprose testing facilities to get our first look at Grand Prix 3, and give it a lengthy and thorough test drive. After a few welcome drinks and a bit more chat, the moment of truth had come. As Nick fired up the test machines on which Grand Prix 3 was installed, it was impossible not to surrender to the significance of the occasion. Emotions meandered from pure child-like anticipation to nervousness and everything in between. Then one peculiar thought took us by surprise: how do you improve upon something like GP2? Sure, we were expecting to see new cars, changes to the tracks (and our very own Albert Park - RIP Adelaide!), updated statistics, some alteration to the handling, and, of course, prettier graphics. But is that it? Is the sum total of four years development a bunch of incidental changes and prettier graphics? And that's not mentioning the fact that not all of GP3's courses will be new - more than 90% of them were featured in GP2.

So it was with a small seed of doubt in our minds and plenty of

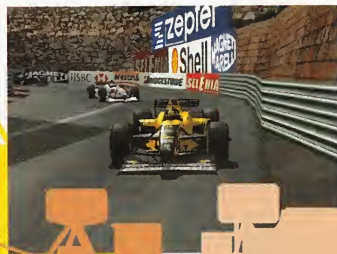
Like a tiger

The moment the lights went green and we had dropped the vehicle into first gear, it all fell into place. Bigger the ever-looming release date - in an instant it was evident that Crammond and his team had *already* delivered the finest racing simulation on the PC to date. Even in its unfinished state - and without having experimented with car setup or having a good play-around with the many options in the game, Grand Prix 3 had taken our breath away.

It was all on account of the feel of the car, and the way it responded to our subtle commands. Most racing or driving games manage to capture the nuances of motion without much trouble at all, and almost all of them manage to nail the sensation of speed - two crucial elements in any driving game.

But very few racing games deliver the sensation which Grand Prix 3 seems to impart almost effortlessly. What Crammond and co. have managed to do above the norm - and it has to be experienced to be truly appreciated - is provide an almost tangible sense of being in control





of a huge beast of a racing machine. This is a racing simulation where the engine keeps pushing for more, and you find yourself having to hold back - lest you find yourself out of the race. So much so, that idling around the track on a practice lap seeing what your Formula 1 car can do is just as much satisfying as competing in a race.

Nick concedes that the real guts of GP3 can't be done justice in a bunch of screenshots. "Grand Prix 3 - and really any simulation - can be likened to an iceberg: there's the visible tip, but there's so much more that goes on underneath it all. And that's the sim; it's the AI and physics engine, it's the traction of the tyres on a given surface, it's the aerodynamics of the car, etc."

The Nuts and Bolts

Apart from an updated physics engine and AI changes, GP3 - in keeping with series - will provide a whole slew of options for the gamer to play around with. Gamers will be able to take part in a quick race (just click and go), a non-championship single race and, of course, a full Championship season complete with practice and qualifying rounds. There are five difficulty levels as well as a host of driving assist features (as seen in GP2) planned. These will serve as

training wheels which can be gradually turned off until players reach a level of difficulty they are happy with.

And for the more experienced players seeking to extract the best performance from their cars, GP3 will continue the tradition of extensive setup options to fiddle around with. This ranges from most straightforward aspects like wing position, gear ratios and brake balance to advanced features like spring adjustment, ride height, dampeners, etc. Adjustments to a car's setup will affect its performance and handling, and Microprose has taken more care to ensure that this better explained to the gamer. While the manual will be a little thicker this time around, Nick suggests you don't overlook the value of getting those hands greased up: "To us the manual is something you should read four of five days afterwards in the can. Get out there and experiment!"

The Upgrade

Given GP2's apparent brilliance, and that a lot of the features present in it are finding their way into this sequel, just how much of it has been recycled for use in Grand Prix 3?

"Very little. Most areas of the

game have been overhauled throughout the development - that's why it has taken four years to create it," explains Nick. "Because we've got more processor power, we can go into more depth with the physics and AI, etc. So all of those areas have been upgraded, the graphics have been updated. All of the circuits have been upgraded to reflect what they were in the '98 season: there's been an awful lot of changes to the circuits themselves since '94 - the corners have been changed, new safety rules have been incorporated for instance."

One of the major changes implemented during this season was the introduction of grooves in the cars' tyres - reducing grip on the road thus forcing down the speed of the cars on the circuit. This was done to avert tragedies like the one that claimed Ayrton Senna's life in the '96 season. It is changes like these incorporated into GP3 that should provide a challenging experience to those enthusiasts familiar with the series. "The game offers something new - there's always new challenges to be overcome," explains Nick. "It'll take people a long time to learn each of the circuits. And



Microprose hold the official FOA license - so expect to see all the drivers, teams and tracks faithfully - and accurately - recreated.

**"GRAND PRIX 3
CAN BE LIKENED
TO AN
ICEBERG..."**



Grand Prix 3 uses the one car model throughout the game - with only the colours and decals changing between the teams. As to which car Crammond modeled his GP3 beauty? Nick remained tight-lipped...



just because they've played GP2 it doesn't mean they're going to know the circuits - there's been a lot of changes to them. Okay, it's a corner here, a corner there, but there's also been changes to the cars, the amount of downforce they've got, the amount of grip, etc which changes when you can brake, where your steering should start, etc. Some of the things you would've gotten away with in GP2 you won't necessarily get away with in GP3. It's a totally different game."

Dynamic Weather

One of the other big changes that fans have been begging for since its omission from GP2 is weather effects. Grand Prix 3 will feature the wet, but Crammond has gone one step further - introducing dynamic weather. Instead of a fully sodden race, the rain may stop in GP3 or start mid-race, and will affect the driving style required - at least, if the racer wishes to remain in contention. "Yes, it'll stop raining, with the track drying out - and you can be left with just puddles on the track.

As you drive around you can be creating a drying line which alters your strategy: when do you decide that the drying line is good enough for you to come in? You can also drive into the wet to cool off your tyres, etc. The weather is a major part of Formula One racing.

But for this addition, one painful concession had to be made: GP3 will not feature drivers hands. "We looked at putting the drivers hands in there," Nick admits. "At the moment we haven't got the [processing] speed and power to put them in there without them looking like lumps of wood, and that's something we want to avoid. We want them to look real. Otherwise, against everything else they're going to stick out quite badly. And there are other priorities at the moment."

Multi-Competition

Which brings us to multiplayer. As most gamers would whole-heartedly agree, playing against real live opponents is one of the most thrilling aspects of computer gaming. This is especially true of racing games, and Microprose is aware that it extends the life of a game dramatically. The challenge and

enjoyment coming from trying to outdrive and outsmart a real opponent instead of a computer generated one is beyond compare, and the sheer numbers of racers getting together online or at LAN events to race lies testament to its popularity.

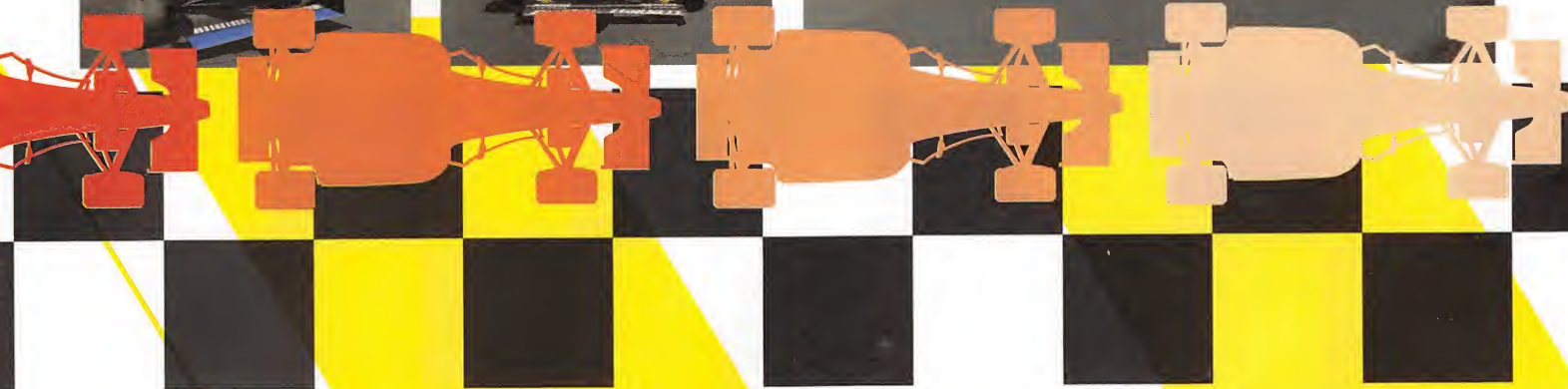
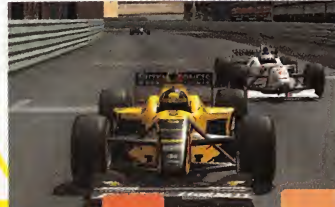
Grand Prix 3 features a number of multiplayer support options. As featured in GP2, GP3 will include hotseat play (players sharing the same computer) and serial/modem-to-modem support for two player games. LAN support is in, though the exact number of players allowed using this method is as yet undecided. Microprose are shooting for 16 players, although it seems more than likely that this number may have to be reduced to 8 over a LAN.

As for internet play, the news isn't as promising. "We've left out internet support at the moment because of the lag times," explains Nick. "With games like Quake you can forgive the lag and people jumping about because it doesn't significantly alter or affect the gameplay. But with a racing game, when you're wheel to wheel with another driver, dealing with lag is an impossibility. Especially when you don't know what that car is going to do next. Imagine trying to overtake another driver with their car jumping and stuttering

**"YOU CAN ALSO
DRIVE INTO THE
WET TO COOL
OFF YOUR
TYRES..."**



Grand Prix 3 will feature a whole host of camera angles to play around with. However, these will be most useful in replay mode, where you'll be able to relive your moments of glory (or those spectacular collisions).



about the track. It's not a lot of fun, I assure you. Internet support is something we're looking into for future Grand Prix games, but for now it's unfortunately beyond our reach."

1998 Season

One other area of Grand Prix 3 which may concern some of the more currency-conscious gamers out there is its fixture on the 1998 season instead of the 2000 one. Rest assured: as has been the running theme, the developers

more concerned with the quality of the sim than its marketability.

"We've been able to attain a massive amount of rich data on the '98 season," says Nick. "We know what happened in all the races and why, and we know about all about the cars and the modifications to the sport. It takes an awful long time to incorporate that data into a simulation and then to test it, tweak it and make sure it feels right."

"We've found that a lot of people aren't so concerned about

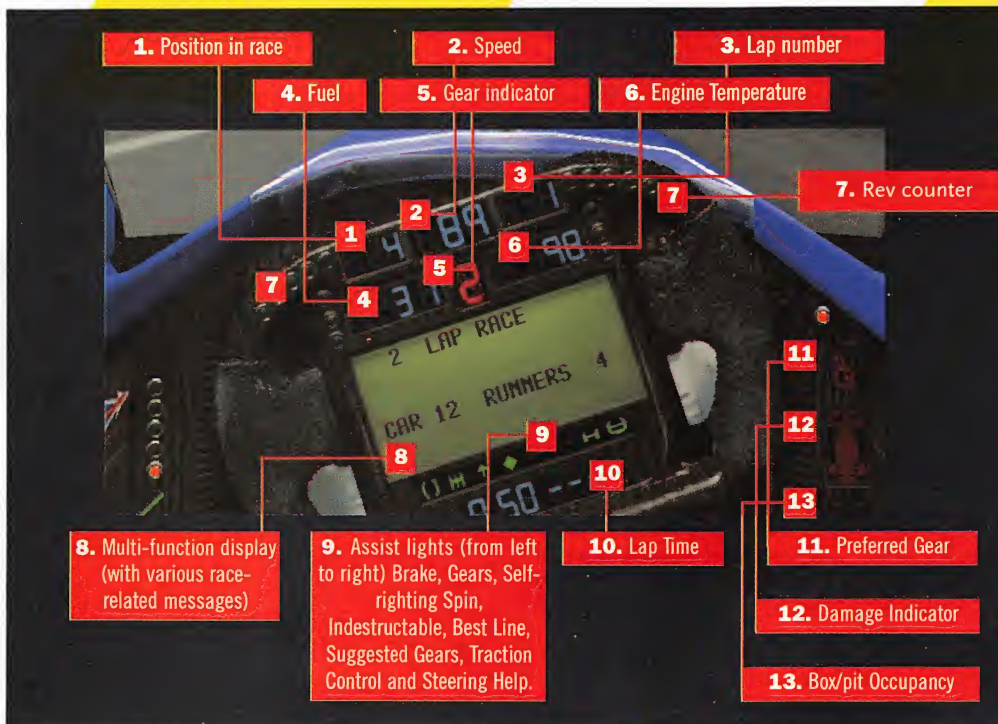
what date is associated with the game. The message from fans has been - and it has been loud and clear - 'just give us a damn good driving game!' Which is what they'll get."

This close to the final laps of Grand Prix 3's development, it seems that Microprose will deliver exactly what they've promised - an exceptional Formula 1 racing simulation bursting at the seams with playability. Whether you're looking for a quick bash around

the track, want to slowly improve your racing skills or want the full Grand Prix racing experience - GP3 will have it covered.

Meanwhile, back at the Microprose testing facility, PCPP's Ed Fox managed to shave 4 seconds off Nick Court's best time on a two lap run on the Monaco circuit.

Nick leans back, sighs, then lets out a hearty laugh. "Looks like I'm going to have to get some more practice in." ■



And The Wheel Turns

"We've re-engineered the steering wheel and cockpit from GP2," explains Nick. "The cockpit you're seeing, although generic, is based rather tightly around an actual F1 cockpit from the 98 season. The steering is a generic steering wheel based on a concoction of all the real teams' wheels. We did this for the player - that's where all the info is. To move between two teams and have to look around for all the information [if the wheels were different] can be quite annoying. We think it works quite well, given that it's the first steering wheel we've ever done that moves, and the information remains clean and easy to read."

The Grand Prix 3 steering wheel is a joy to behold. Here's a brief run down of the information you get from it.

Take Pole Position

WITH A PLETHORA OF FANTASTIC RACING GAMES ON THE MARKET AND SOME CORKERS ON THEIR WAY, **EDWARD FOX** INVESTIGATES THE HARDWARE ON OFFER TO HELP THE MODERN DAY DRIVER GET THE ULTIMATE RACING EXPERIENCE.

* There are basically two types of simulated motor sports enthusiasts: the casual gamer who plays for the pure fun of it, and the hardcore nutter who is after the most intense experience he or she can possibly muster without resorting to the actual thing! The casuals are usually less experienced amongst the virtual racing ranks and generally aren't fussed about which type of controller they use, as long as the action is fast-paced and at a level that they can win. This blatant disregard of realism is often shunned by the hardcore contingency, most of whom opt for the high-tech, high-challenge and generally high-price gadgetry.

The Basics

On the low end of the scale is the average PC keyboard. Now while great for typing an essay, when it comes to steering the wheels of a car, it wasn't really designed for the task. The same can be said for a joystick as well, for even though it actually is an analogue device, it doesn't come close to the smoothness and precision obtained by the average steering wheel. Just imagine trying to drive your family car with a keyboard or a joystick, those premiums would start flying through the roof! With the rapidly increasing level of skill brewing in

the online racing community, the sport has now come to realise that when virtual performance is in demand, a keyboard or a joystick (Wolfgang Woher of GPL fame may disagree, however), just doesn't cut it.

The Real Deal

Alternately, on the high end of the scale are racing wheels and pedals including the star of the show in the form of the Hyper stimulator, the most advanced piece of racing technology for the modern day armchair racer. Other popular devices include the Logitech Formula Force, Thrustmaster Nascar series, as well as the Microsoft Sidewinder Precision Pro. In addition to high quality (most of the time), many controllers now offer force feedback, that gorgeous new depth of immersion for gaming freaks world wide to dip their senses into. For the uninitiated, force feedback is a feature inherent in many joysticks and wheels these days that provides physical feedback according to the action on screen.

With this plethora of options available to the virtual racer, the question must be asked. "Just what is the ultimate racing set-up?". The only way this question can be answered is by taking a look at what is available.

Logitech Wingman Formula & Formula Force

The true workhorse of all wheels, the Wingman formula wins the race when it comes to comfort and value for money. Piloting any virtual racecar armed with this baby and you're certain to improve lap times and consistency. The ergonomic design of the wheel is truly a blessing for those long distance race-a-thons, and the traditional F1 style gear change paddles are positioned perfectly for comfort, leaving one hundred percent of your concentration to the action on-track without having to fumble for oddly positioned gear levers.

The Wingman Formula also comes in a Force Feedback variant, and is an experience that must be felt to be believed. The level of

immersion flies through the roof with this option turned on. From a slight bump in the road, to the struggle of guiding a half tonne monster around a 180-degree bend, all is sculptured wonderfully.

For true value without compromising comfort, you can't look past the Logitech Wingman wheels.

Thrustmaster NASCAR series

As the name says, the Thrustmaster NASCAR series of race controllers were designed with the NASCAR driver in mind. Only a few years ago, Thrustmaster was the end-all-and-end-all of not just race wheels but joysticks as well. However, as witnessed in the last few years, the market has been overcome with wheels of all shapes and sizes from varying manufacturers and thus the competition became tight. It seems Thrustmaster, though



Logitech's Wingman Formula is the reigning champ of racing wheels. And it's yellow too.



renowned for its contributions to the market, fell behind the times as they concentrated more on their sticks than their wheels. Having said this, Thrustmaster still produces some quality wheels today, such as the Force GT with - surprise, surprise - Force Feedback and the Pro Digital aimed towards the affordable end of the market. Both wheels do the job extremely well, but as mentioned earlier are really more in tune with stockcars than a modern F1 vehicle.



affordable than its counterparts, the

Sidewinder series offers little in the way comfort or quality, but is perfect for the casual racer who wants to experience a wheel.

MS Sidewinder Precision Pro & Force Feedback

Relatively new kid on the virtual racing block, Microsoft has seen fit to launch an attack on the racing controller market with the Precision Pro and the Force Feedback. Both are identical in shape and size, with the only difference being the addition of a Force Feedback feature to the wheel with its namesake.

Both are comfy and perform well, but just don't look or feel realistic enough compared to what else is available. The hard plastic mould of both wheels is disgusting both cosmetically and ergonomically, and the poorly positioned gear levers cause problems for the vertically challenged. Whilst a little more

Hyper Stimulator

Truly the daddy of simulated motor sports paraphernalia, the Hyper Stimulator will get you as close to the action as you are ever likely to get. Designed around the concept of a racing cockpit, the Hyperstim is pure class all the way! With extras like the sequential gear shifter and the surround sound audio/feedback device, you'll not only drive the race, but feel the cockpit shake and shudder as well. Prices range from a rather extravagant two grand pre-built masterpiece with all the added goodies, to a "construction required" seven hundred dollar do-it-yourself job. Whatever your choice, if you buy a Hyperstim, you'll never get out of it!

Edward Fox



The Hyper Stimulator (top right) is essentially an F1 car minus the wheels and engine. For the hardcore racer, it's worth the money.

Formula Force Fitness

No-one ever would have dreamed that physical fitness would be a requirement necessary for piloting a virtual race car, but with the implementation of force feedback in almost all motor sport titles released these days it's quickly becoming a factor.

Generally the level of feedback produced can be adjusted by either the controller software or in the game itself, but for the ultimate in immersion, tuning the feedback to real-life levels is the only option imaginable. With each buck and shunt of the wheel representing bumps in the road, the car responding to inertia and those all-too-familiar over exuberant competitors, your arms will be bashed and abused until they either fall out of their sockets or begin to resemble Arnie!

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Starlancer

THE GORGEOUS NEW SPACE-SHOOTER FROM DIGITAL ANVILL WILL HAVE YOU SEEING STARS. WE GET IN THE COCKPIT AND TAKE IT FOR A SPIN.





It's a big universe, and with over 25 extensive missions you'll get to see a whole lot of it.



DETAILS

■ **Genre:** Space Shooter

■ **Players:** 1-Multi

■ **Developer:** Digital Anvil

■ **Publisher:** Microsoft

■ **Due:** JUNE.

* Logging into your email, a message from the captain blips up on the news screen. "48 hours ago, a surprise strike force decimated the French and Italian fleets moored in Martian orbit. A newly formed coalition of Eastern nations has made a grab for power. Their aim is to take everything we have built with our blood, tears and toil. The remnants of the French and Italian fleets will rendezvous with our American, British, German, Spanish and Japanese allies in orbit around Neptune's moon, Triton. We will regroup, establish a new command structure and assess our best strategy. There, on the edge of the solar system, we will make our stand. Godspeed." Two thoughts fly through your mind:

1. I'd better get to the briefing room, my crew will be waiting.

2. What happened to the Australian fleet? Are they the enemy? Nah....

StarLancer, the much anticipated space-shooter from Microsoft affiliate Digital Anvil, takes this predicament to the hilt, throwing you head-first into the inky blackness of the universe of the future.

They're baaaaack...

On the surface, StarLancer, looks like any space-blaster out there, but this title has one thing very obviously in its favour. It's being developed and overseen by Chris and Erin Roberts, the inventors of Wing Commander - which will be ringing the bells inside the heads of the many thousands who lived for it since its release in 1990. The Roberts' brothers followed this up with numerous Wing sequels and the Privateer series, making it pretty obvious that StarLancer has a good chance of success. Check out our 'Digital Anvil' boxout to see the other games that the Roberts'

brothers are working on.

Billed as having the 'action of first-person space combat' with the 'drama and intrigue of a classic dogfight movie', StarLancer is certainly an ambitious continuation of the space-shooter genre. At the outset you enlist with the Western Alliance and join a newly formed, ragtag aviation unit, ominously called the 45th Volunteers Squadron. Consisting entirely of rookies like yourself, the 45th is one of the last lines of defence for the beleaguered Western Alliance. Basically, you're it. So strap on the helmet and move it rookie!

Mission balance and depth

Of course, saving the world is never an easy task, nor a simplistic one. As such, the missions in StarLancer (over 25 in the final version) vary in style from assaulting fighters and space stations to escorting a marine boarding ship to free POWs. The variety of gameplay in the missions is definitely evident in the game, but don't worry, there is plenty of dog-fighting action to be had. The

DIGITAL ANVIL

Based in Austin, Texas (the City of Ideas - the signs tell us) the work of Digital Anvil has been closely followed since its inception. Chris Roberts, of Wing Commander fame, founded the studio in 1996, and StarLancer is the much anticipated first product.

With some very famous names in the videogame business (Tony Zurovec, Erin Roberts, Craig Cox, Sean Kelley and Mark Galvin) working at Digital Anvil, the worldwide press have been waiting with bated breath for the output of this talented crew. Freelancer has been the title occupying the minds of many in gaming, winning many 'Best of E3' awards last year, even though it was still a year and a half from completion. Best described as a space action/adventure, its multiplayer potential and massive scale are awe-inspiring. Also on the cards is Loose Cannon, a car-combat, bounty-hunter romp through four massive cities, and Conquest: Frontier Wars, a fleet-based, RTS game.

For more information on the people behind StarLancer, check out their website at www.digitalanvil.com.





"... PLAYERS CAN FLY THROUGH MISSIONS COOPERATIVELY"

The HUD may not look revolutionary, but the smooth framerates will certainly impress space combat fans.

amenities. See Kickin' Back in the Cabin for more details.

Flight dynamics

But what you really want to know is how it feels. And the answer is... very, very nice. As you would expect from the people who have worked on the Wing Commander series, the flight is smooth and realistic. (As realistic as I assume dogfighting in space to be!) Control is logical and informative, although the many flashy pop-up 3D menus take a while to get used to. My main gripe with the control at this stage is that you might need to reconfigure the keyboard controls to be a little closer together - unless you have three hands (*Or a joystick - Ed*). That said, the 3D engine behind StarLancer appears to be handling the stress of multiple enemies and environments well, with smooth and consistent framerates on the levels I played. Some of the particle and lighting effects in the game are especially eye-opening. Seeing the 'halo' effect after a devastating direct missile hit really makes you feel the impact of your actions. In addition, the galaxy backdrop is beautiful to look at - it always seemed to distract me just long enough to not notice the fighter locking on my tail!

Slick Craft and Weaponry

The ships available in StarLancer are most definitely evolutionary, not revolutionary.

You can choose out of just over a dozen craft, using the impressive 3D menu in the briefing room. The game offers helpful suggestions for each of the different missions, but there is always room for personal choice / suicide. The initial, unlocked, ships I flew had a very nice balance, although you could certainly do with the improved armour and speed of the locked vessels. You can then arm your ships as you choose, with nova cannons, particle guns and jackhammer missiles. Even your choice of specific lasers is very important for different missions. A few of the pulse lasers that we witnessed were devastating on standing objects when fully charged, but useless in the dog-fight-dog world of combat. As I mentioned before, some of the weapon effects are unbelievably good, and it's worth loading up just to see those hits score!

StarLancer is certainly looking like one of the slickest combat games on the horizon. It remains to be seen if the game can recreate the tension and drama of the movies that it seeks to, but at this early stage it certainly appears to be doing that. The 'living universe' of background space-ships and locker-room buddies certainly helps immerse you in the game, and the feel of the ships - blasting away for the Western Alliance - is satisfying. All that remains now is for StarLancer to be released so that we can play it!

Dan Ziffer

missions we have flown have a nice flow to them, but will prove challenging, at least initially. One of the best features of StarLancer - and the one that has really caught my eye - is the way that the multiplayer aspect has been incorporated into the game. Players can fly through missions cooperatively, even through the complete campaign if they wish. This can be done with up to 4 players, improving your chances of success. Just can't get through the defences of the Eastern Coalition? Go on the net and see if you can't find a dab hand willing to help you out. Or forget the missions and just duke it out with up to 8 players playing through 6 different deathmatch modes (via LAN or the net).

No Mark Hamill

To immerse you in the game, StarLancer includes over 25 minutes of top-quality computer-

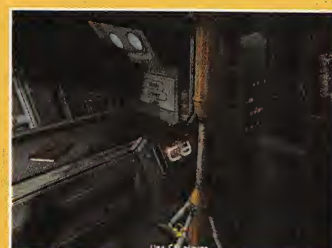
generated FMVs. While it's not quite the same as seeing Mark Hamill on screen, ala Wing Commander, the renders are of a very high standard, and communicate the urgency and importance of your missions. As previously mentioned, the game is always trying to get you to feel that drama and intrigue of the classic war flicks you were brought up on. In addition to this, I've been informed that there are over 250 unique pilot animations, although the developer refused to confirm if the famous finger move 'the bird' would be available in any cheat codes. Further player interaction is available out of the cockpit. After a tough mission you can cool down by navigating key parts of the good ship Reliant. Pilots also can use their bunkrooms as a virtual menu, with a locker for medals, a simulator pod for flight practice, a CD player and other

Kickin' Back in the Cabin

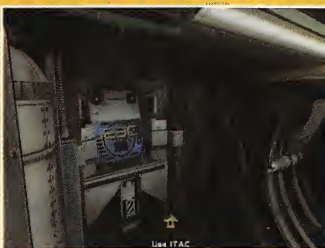
One of the nice touches about StarLancer is your intricately-detailed cabin. With a CD Player, a Simulation Pod and an ITAC (information database) you'll have plenty to do as you chill after a difficult mission. Your locker houses a medal box (and some old sneakers) which will bring you infinite pride, or, if you don't get any medals, a lingering sense of shame. Your CD player will let you cue up a track, so that you listen to your favourites as you work on your skills in the Sim Pod. The fish tank near your bed is a soothing reminder of the fauna you won't see for about another ten space-years. Finally, the Intelligence and Tactical Computer (ITAC) offers information on the conflict: hear news reports, gather data on the weaknesses of enemy ships, check the records of your superiors for some briefing-room gossip... But possibly the best thing is the differing reactions of your buddies in the corridor. If you have a great mission and save the day, it's high-fives all round. But screw it up and lose some wing-men and they won't want to know you. Some friends they are, huh? Anyway, I've got to go, I just got a news report on enemy movements, and I've got to work on my gunning skills.



Doesn't that bed look comfortable?



You really should clean up this place.



ITAC - a never-ending source of info.



And lastly, your simulation pod.

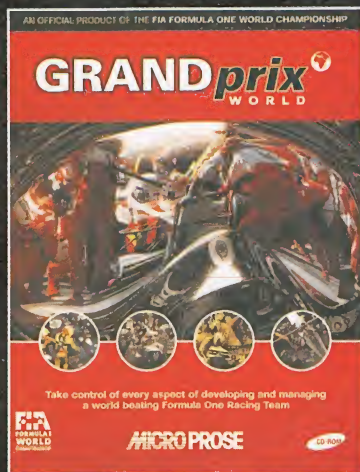
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***PREVIEWS**

COLIN MCR



AE RALLY 2

"KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE ROAD, AND YOUR HANDS UPON THE WHEEL". THIS IS NO SINGING MATTER, IT'S SIMPLY SMART ADVICE!

DETAILS

- Genre: Rally Sim
- Players: 1-6
- Developer: Codemasters
- Publisher: Codemasters
- Due: June 2000

* When it comes to finely tuned fun of the four wheel variety, there's only one thing more satisfying than tearing up strips of tarmac with all wheels planted firmly on the ground. And that's working your way up, over, and around some of the gruelling courses that make up the sport of rally driving. Well, at least that's the thinking and philosophy used by the team at Codemasters that brought us the highly successful Colin McRae Rally. However, little did we know the original title was merely a taste of what was yet to come. Prepare yourself for the sound of throaty engines once again, with the upcoming release of their next instalment, unsurprisingly titled Colin McRae Rally 2. Already some 18 months into development, the forty

strong team of graphic artists, programmers and audio experts have stripped down the original and rebuilt it from the ground up, looking in every nook and cranny for ways to improve the game's overall performance. "The team really didn't want to do another version with just more cars and tracks," explains Guy Wilday, the game's producer at Codemasters. "We've gone back and looked at every aspect of the original, and worked on ways to improve it, and then gone on to add some exciting new features."

Feel the interface

The thing you notice right away is the cleaner look and feel of the front-end player interface. It's redesigned look offers a more functional set of menus, aimed at providing the quickest and easiest access to the race options. Once selecting a race mode, it's straight into the setup/repair screen, which has also experienced a major facelift.

One of the most crucial bits of information now available is the weather forecast, as the weather plays a much more dynamic, yet unpredictable part in the stages. This will force players to put more thought into tyre selection, gearbox ratios, suspension setups and the redesigned braking characteristics. Of course, as with all weather forecasts, they're about as reliable as public transport timetables. This only adds



Colin plays a childish game of 'corners' with co-driver Nicky. "Owww!"

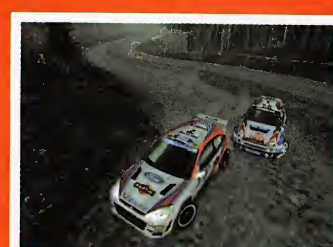
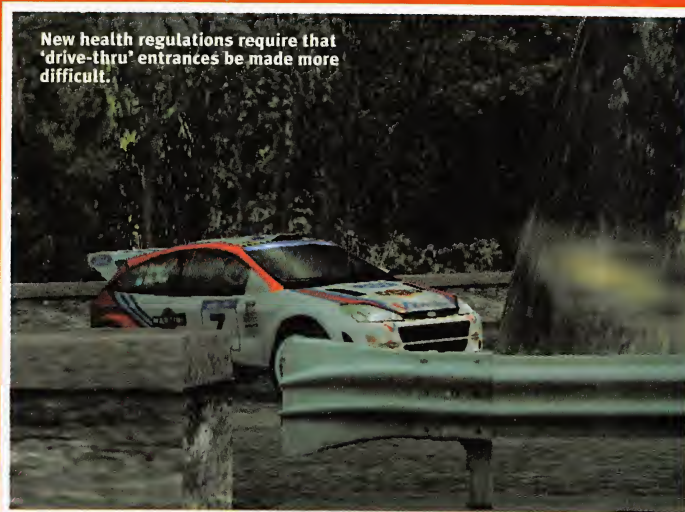
to the difficulty of the stages, as they regenerate randomly at different times - even during the same stages.

While the names of the actual countries used in the game have not all been confirmed as yet, Australia is a certain contender, and at least three of the new countries are Finland, Kenya and Italy. Naturally all the environments and stages are brand new designs. A nice new feature is an FMV introducing each country, offering an overview of the following stages presented by Colin McRae's co-driver, Nicky Grist.

LAN party time

There are essentially two main racing styles: Rally and, new to

"...THE WEATHER PLAYS A MUCH MORE DYNAMIC, YET UNPREDICTABLE PART IN THE STAGES."



All the scouts begin rushing into camp to set up...

SO WHO THE HELL IS COLIN MCRAE?

* Born August 5, 1968, Colin was destined to follow in his father's footsteps, who was British champion no less than five times. He made his rally debut in 1986, and after five 'quiet' years with Talbot, got his big break with Subaru. Two British titles quickly followed then his first World Rally Championship title came along in 1995. Since then Colin and co-driver Nicky Grist have since finished runners-up on two occasions. So how much involvement has McRae had in the games? "Quite a lot this time," says Wilday, "especially after the success of the first game. Colin has become much more involved with the mechanics, obviously the car handling is his thing. He's been keen to see how the cars behave on the different surfaces. Nicky has been involved in telling us how all the countries should look, and if they look right."



this sequel, *Arcade Rally* offers the authentic rally experience - it's just you against the clock - and remains relatively unchanged from the original. *Arcade*, however, is quite a different beast. "The new arcade mode", says Wilday, "was the single biggest thing we had feedback about from the people who liked the original. They wanted to be able to race Colin McRae 'mechanics' in an arcade environment, and that is exactly what we've done with this mode. It's looping tracks, it's six rally cars, in bumper-to-bumper action".

In this mode, there is a different circuit for each of the eight countries, offering a taste of every surface available to battle it out on. There are also no distracting co-driver instructions, and cars don't sustain any of the damage they do in the other modes. Arcade races also include championship, single race and time trial modes as well. Naturally the playing arena for this mode is suited perfectly for a six player LAN setup, but it gets better as they also plan to offer internet game play.

If you're a bit on the anti-social side you can still enjoy the arcade mode by simply racing against computer controlled cars. To this end, Wilday points out that they have been focusing heavily on the AI: "All the cars use a neuro-net system that we train them with. We have a guy here with a PhD in neuro-nets, who has helped us

teach the cars how to drive. You see, not only will they be out trying to take the lead off you, but you will also see them battling it out with each other for front position."

Slip and slide

Now for those that haven't been following Colin McRae's almost rockstar-like rise to fame (which now sees him autographing just as many computer game boxes as rally magazine centrefolds), you might not be aware he's dumped the Subaru Impreza. He now drives a fully reworked Ford Focus, which naturally features heavily in the game. At present, Wilday claims there will be up to 19 vehicles to choose from - 12 world famous rally cars, such as the Ford Escort, Mitsubishi Lancer, Toyota Corolla and, of course, the Subaru Impreza. In addition, a number of classic rally cars can be unlocked if you're good enough.

The graphical detail of the cars is nothing short of amazing, thanks largely to the increased use of polygons in each model. Everything from the finely detailed contours of the external bodies and the semi-transparent windscreens exposing the driver and co-driver, to the devastating damage caused by careless driving all looks convincingly photo realistic. Vehicle mechanics and physics have gone basically untouched since, according to Wilday, this is the area the developers were most happy with.

However, some welcome new features include independent suspension on all four wheels. Also, they now spin more accurately, which adds more realism when watching the car skid and slide. Vehicle damage now has a more adverse effect on the car's handling, you will hear the gear box miss gears causing loss of performance, and wrecked body parts will flap about, affecting the wind resistance, until eventually breaking away.

Bump and grind

It must be said that successful sequels to classic games are a tall order. There's always a need to attract new users, while not alienating the existing fans, and also not falling into the trap of repackaging the first game. It can be confidently said Colin McRae Rally 2 looks set to clear both those barriers by a long shot, as the designers carefully addressed those issues right back at the beginning. Their plan was to design new features, then merge them with the old gameplay that won fans over in the first place. If you prefer your driving games with a little more bump and grind, and lot less control than you would otherwise expect from a standard street car, watch out for the release of Colin McRae Rally 2 around the middle of the year.

Mike Wilcox



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***PREVIEWS**

SHOGUN:

AN AMBITIOUS STRATEGY GAME FEATURING THE UNDENIABLE STYLE OF FEUDAL JAPAN



Armies in 16th century Japan were clearly very organised. A glimpse, perhaps, of the origins of today's typical salaryman.

"THE SOLE RESOURCE IN THE GAME IS 'KOKU', THE ONCE STANDARD MEASUREMENT OF RICE."

DETAILS

- Genre: Strategy
- Players: 1-16
- Developer: Dreamtime
- Publisher: EA
- Due: 2nd Qtr 2000

* One of the most comprehensive and eagerly anticipated historical strategy games of the past few years is finally nearing completion. Originally slated to appear on retail shelves in early 1999, *Shogun: Total War* has weathered the release of competing titles like *Braveheart*, and undergone drastic metamorphoses during its admittedly protracted development period. Although the recently released demo has afforded strategy devotees a glimpse of what *Shogun* has to offer, much of the gaming community remains unaware of the wealth of features and the innate complexity central to *Shogun's* gameplay.

The game is set in Japan during the 16th century, a tumultuous era in which the country was divided into many clan-ruled provinces. Each province was controlled by a Daimyo, or feudal lord, whose responsibility lay in maintaining prosperity and order within his province. Presiding over the Daimyo, and over the operations of the entire nation, was the supreme ruler known as the Shogun. The player will assume the role of a Daimyo who aspires to one day

micromanage of resources, diplomacy and espionage, as well as combat. Combat itself will be handled in a manner familiar to many strategy gamers, with the AI taking numerous factors into consideration when calculating the outcome of each conflict.

Realtime strategists will also be catered for with a campaign comprised of numerous C&C-style battle scenarios. Each battle will take place on the Combat screen, using a unique interface that gives the player exacting control over every aspect of combat. The final game mode combines the first two types into a campaign that may take weeks to complete. Much of the campaign will be played from the Strategic screen, but the game will shift to the Combat screen when battles occur. On the Strategic screen, the player will be able to forge military and trade alliances with other Daimyo, trade with outside parties like the Spaniards, and infiltrate enemy territories using numerous spy units. Management of resources, as well as unit movements will also be controlled from this screen.

The sole resource in the game is "koku", the once standard measurement of rice. Being a food resource, it only becomes available once per year during the Autumn harvest. Once stockpiled, koku can be used to construct various buildings, and train many different

campaign progresses, continually achieving a delicate balance between elite units and cannon fodder will become a top priority. New units and buildings will continually become available, enabling the player to train Warrior Monks, Samurai Archers, and No Dachi, highly skilled Samurai equipped with gigantic swords. Emmissaries, Shinobi, Ninja and Geisha will also become available over the course of the campaign. Emmissaries will be useful in maintaining diplomatic relationships, while Shinobi, Ninja and Geisha will be masters of infiltrating adjoining regions, assassinating key personnel and keeping the player apprised of the economic and military status of enemy provinces.

Death before dishonour

The Combat screen features sprites and three-dimensional structures superimposed over rolling hills, towering mountain ranges and dense forests. The fact that Dreamtime elected not to use 3D units within the game was a particularly wise decision, no doubt influenced by *Braveheart's* abysmal framerate. In combat, the player will have control over thousands of individual units, determining their formations, rules of engagement, and positions on the battlefield. Morale, stamina and honour will determine the effectiveness and subsequent success or failure of

become Shogun and bring all of Japan under his dominion.

Divide and conquer

Shogun: Total War will feature several distinct modes of play, each with its own campaign. Turn based strategy traditionalists will be able to undertake an entire campaign without leaving the confines of the Risk-style Strategic screen. This screen shows the three main islands of Japan from an above perspective, highlighting territorial boundaries and the like. As a result of this specialised approach, the player will be able to focus on

unit types. Because of the limited availability of koku, and the fact that only one unit type may be trained per season, acquisition of new unit and structure types is slower than in most strategy titles, but this also serves to enhance *Shogun's* already impressive levels of realism.

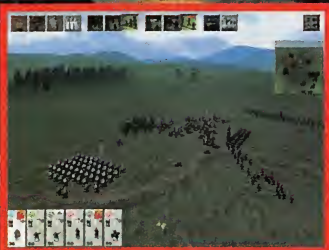
Mighty swords

Shogun's most basic combat units are the Ashigaru, or peasant spearmen. In terms of koku, they are quite cheap and only take one season to train. By contrast, elite mounted Heavy Cavalry units take six seasons to train and cost a fortune. As the

these units. Morale will be particularly important, as units ordered to engage a superior enemy force may instead drop their weapons and flee the area.

According to Dreamtime, there will also be a heavy emphasis on multiplayer gaming. Several multiplayer systems will be offered, including a play-by-email option. By all indications, this extremely ambitious game has the potential to become one of the all time greats of the genre. As to whether *Shogun: Total War* lives up to that potential, we can only hope.

Brett Robinson



Total War



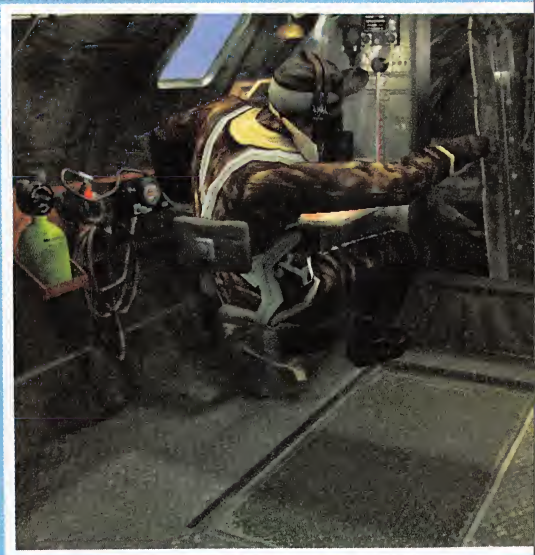
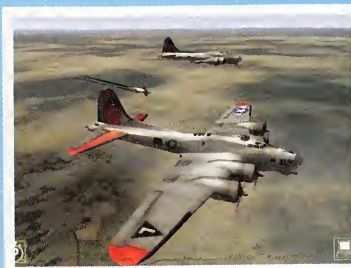
B-17

THE MIGHTY EIGHTH

MAJOR DES ENTERS THE COCKPIT TO PILOT YOU THROUGH ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING FLIGHT SIMS ON THE HORIZON.



The guys back at shop aren't going to be happy with this lot.





"HOW DO YOU JUDGE DISTANCE OR FIND YOUR WAY HOME WITH A WOUNDED NAVIGATOR?"

DETAILS

■ **Genre:** Historical Flight Sim/FPS
 ■ **Players:** 1-10
 ■ **Developer:** Microprose
 ■ **Publisher:** Hasbro
 ■ **Due:** Mid-late 2000

***** If it works (and if it ever arrives!) B-17 II: The Mighty Eighth looks set to be the latest in the recent run of genre-busting titles, and the first real attempt to do so in a flight simulation. Part flight sim and part firstperson

shooter, B-17 II also promises to take the combination of strategic and tactical play to a whole new level. Players will handle mission planning, take tactical control of an entire squadron on operations throughout Western Europe, or jump into any one of eleven crew stations. Add an online game that lets you and nine fellow dam-busters crew a single bomber, and this should be something special!

The long wait

PCPP first highlighted this game in our E3 report last August, and I've been sitting around expectantly with my joystick, goggles and leather ever since. Unfortunately, aside from some curious looks at work and a couple of interesting offers, not much has happened in the meantime! I recently asked the developers for an update and the good news is that things are still on track, albeit a little behind schedule. Hang in there. Given the number of games that have been released half-finished in recent times, the wait will be worth it if it allows Microprose to fine tune a

the paces a few times, but the very lack of complex systems will add to the challenge once things start to go wrong. The real test of a player's flying skill will come with the imponderables, such as the effects of poor weather, injured crew members, or damaged systems. Riding the clouds may keep you safe from flak, but what about giving the bombardier a decent crack at the target? How do you judge distance or find your way home with a wounded navigator? What about landing with one engine on fire? During online play in particular, the added responsibility of getting your crew home in one piece will definitely spice up life in the big chair.

Multitasking

As a straight flight sim B-17 II is sure to please, but it's the way it will to capture the complete bomber experience that should make this game a big hit. "You can jump to any of the crew positions within the B-17 at any point during a mission," says Iain Howe, Producer. "Learning AI's are created for each crewmember and these fulfil each of the roles you aren't currently doing yourself." That approach should mean that B-17 II avoids the potential for boredom on long

missions, as players jump to the more active stations at will - the cockpit during takeoff and landing; navigation as you approach the target; and bombardier during the final run. If things get too hot, you can take over a gun turret or even hop into an escort fighter and duel it out with the enemy!

Scalable realism

As well as accurate cockpit models for all available aircraft, each of the crew stations aboard the B-17 will be fully functional, with the player deciding the degree of realism. "We've tried to make everything as redundant as possible, so that players can flick all of the individual switches if they want that level of detail and realism. Or they can use keyboard and control shortcuts if they want the simulation to handle in a more traditional and less detailed way," explains Iain. "This has the effect of sharply decreasing the learn-time before the player can participate in an airborne mission." Crew behaviour will also be simulated in a realistic fashion, with performance dropping off as the result of wounds received during a mission, and the inclusion of routine activities and conversations throughout the flight.

terrific concept.

From the pilot's seat, B-17 II will be a realistic experience, with straightforward controls and the relatively simple procedures used during WWII. Mastering flight basics will not be difficult in this game, particularly once you've watched the AI pilot go through

The main gunner, John, had always suffered from intractable spinal problems.





"THE ULTIMATE EXPERIENCE WILL SEE AN AIRCRAFT CREWED BY TEN PLAYERS..."



Some holiday snaps from the war: (top) Here's the hangar I stayed in. (middle) A bit of sightseeing. (bottom) With a few friends I met along the way.

Bombing accuracy

B-17 II will ship with an impressive range of single mission and campaign options. Training missions will enable players to hone their skills at each of the crew stations, before jumping into a random Quick Start scenario or one of the Historical Missions based on WWII action reports. Campaign options include an Historical Campaign, simulating a complete tour of duty for a bomber crew, or a Squadron Commander Campaign where players plan and direct squadron missions against over 200 targets. Campaign success will be judged through a combination of bombing accuracy and crew survival, presenting players with an interesting juggling act between the needs of the mission and the welfare of their crew.

The strategic aspect of B-17 II is in the mould of a MiG Alley or a Falcon 4, but on a much larger scale. "Mission planning involves planning routes that avoid as much flak and fighter cover as possible, without lengthening the mission unnecessarily," promises Iain. "Waypoints must be adjusted, both two-dimensionally on the map and also in terms of the altitude, for more accurate bombing and for minimising flak risk through different altitudes. Recon missions must also be ordered for potential targets." Logistics will also play a role, with players responsible for aircraft maintenance and crew replacements. That will add an interesting dimension to the game

for those with a bent towards resource management, with campaign performance suffering if losses in either area are too high. As things go downhill, fewer aircraft will be available and rookies will replace experienced crews.

Fly-boys reunite

As exciting as the single player options are, the multiplayer aspect of B-17 II is what most of us have been waiting for. If it performs as advertised, online B-17 II will be the biggest thing to hit the flight sim community this millennium (one of us had to say it first!). Players will be able to create their own bomber with an AI, human, or mixed crew, or join another aircraft at any crew station. The ultimate experience will see a single aircraft crewed by ten human players, all of whom can communicate with each other via the packaged voice communication software, while experiencing exactly the same game environment. After that, the added ability to pilot the escorts or interceptors almost seems like an anti-climax!

At this stage, the goal is to have all single missions and campaigns available for online play, with players able to assume any role within the game, on either side. AI will take care of any unfilled positions, and players will be able to jump to other crew stations or aircraft if their own is destroyed or shot down. This should result in a balanced game, in which total numbers on each side are

determined by the mission parameters or the host player's selections. Depending on player preferences, online campaigns will include the same mission planning and logistics responsibilities seen in single player mode, creating a truly immersive experience for the virtual bomber crew. The online chat should be interesting, as bombardiers press nervous pilots to maintain a steady course for just a few more seconds!

The anticipation!

Whilst Microprose insists that B-17 II is first and foremost a flight sim, the complete package represents the most ambitious attempt at simulating a complete environment that I've seen. The flight model looks first class in its own right, but it's the ability to experience so much more that will make this game stand out from the crowd. As a single player game, B-17 II has a lot to offer: the flight sim; the strategy and tactics; and the opportunity to take personal control of all crew stations. Combine those with what promises to be great graphics and a smart AI, and it's already money well spent (*Hang On, Des, this is only a preview! - Cautious Ed*). But given the hype of the last twelve months or so, B-17 II: The Mighty Eighth will stand or fall based on the success it achieves in bringing genuine, lag-free co-operative play within a single aircraft. My fingers are crossed!

Major Des McNicholas

Planes will obviously handle somewhat differently when damaged.



"My, my, Charlie, those braces you've got are fetching..."

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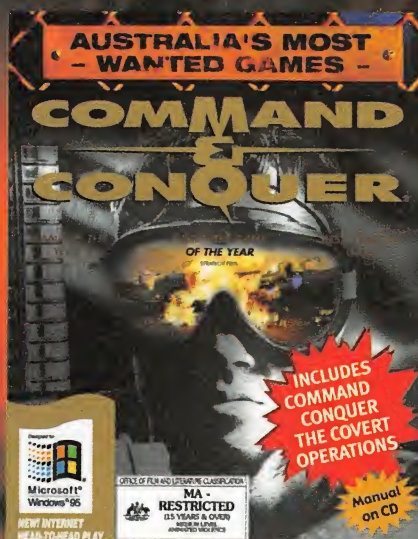
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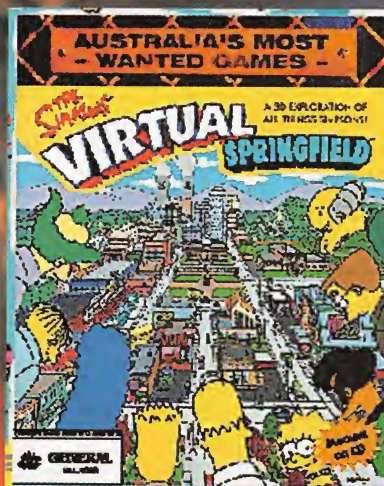
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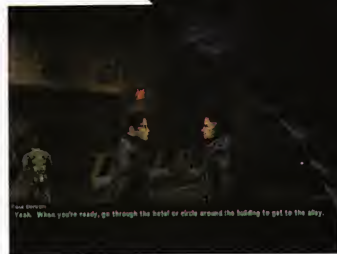
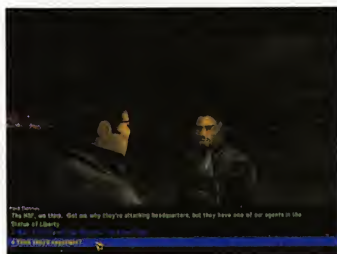
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HN21712

Deus Ex

ION STORM CALLS IT AN IMMERSIVE REALITY SIMULATION. WHAT IT MEANS IS THAT DEUS EX COULD SURPASS HALF-LIFE AS THE FIRSTPERSON ACTION KING.



DETAILS

■ **Genre:** Firstperson Action/Roleplaying/Adventure/Etc
 ■ **Players:** 1
 ■ **Developer:** ION Storm
 ■ **Publisher:** Eidos
 ■ **Due:** June 2000

★ As I strolled along a dimly lit pier, flocks of silver gulls scattered in my wake with retributive squawks. Beneath a lone light pole, a half-empty liquor bottle stood like a sentinel amongst scraps of paper and other debris swirling in the briny breeze. Seeing stairs leading downward, I descended them and found

myself half-submerged in the frigid water of New York Harbour. Fog blanketed the water's surface, and schools of tiny fish darted about, wary of my outstretched limbs. Entranced, I watched them move with a kind of precision normally exhibited by less organic entities. Through the fog came the monotonous clang of a navigation buoy bobbing in the waves. Only the high pitched whirring of a patrolling security mech interrupted my reverie. Somewhat

reluctant to abandon this miniature oasis - this curious juxtaposition of tranquillity and elemental turbulence - I ascended the slippery stairs. A glance at my wristwatch revealed that, in spite of my impromptu dereliction of duty, I was still on schedule. Now all I had to do was await the arrival of my contact.

After reading the paragraph above, it's obvious that my first few minutes in the intriguing world of Deus Ex were special indeed. Even more so when you consider the fact that the code I played was

pre-beta - that is, it's still a long way from being complete. With innate similarities to Thief: The Dark Project and the phenomenal System Shock 2, Deus Ex will have to be near perfect if it wishes to eclipse the

"Hey, Denton, why is it that everytime we talk I feel as if someone is watching us?"



“...DENTON MUST MAKE CRUCIAL DECISIONS ON WHO HE SHOULD TRUST, AND EVENTUALLY CHOOSE WHICH CAUSE HE WILL FIGHT FOR...”



One of the most impressive aspects is the tangible sense that the world doesn't revolve solely around the player.

precedent set by those groundbreaking titles. But with Executive Producer, Warren Spector, at the helm, this doesn't just seem possible. It seems likely.

The Grey Death

Like several titles currently in development, Deus Ex falls into an indefinable category that is part RPG, part FPS and part Adventure game. Understandably, Spector is eager to reinforce the notion that there's no real either/or distinction: "Some people look at Deus Ex and see a shooter, others see a roleplaying game and still others will see an adventure game. In the end, they're all right."

Deus Ex follows the exploits of J.C. Denton, an agent of the United Nations Anti-Terrorist Coalition (UNATCO). He is tasked with fighting terrorist organisations intent on hijacking priceless shipments of the only known

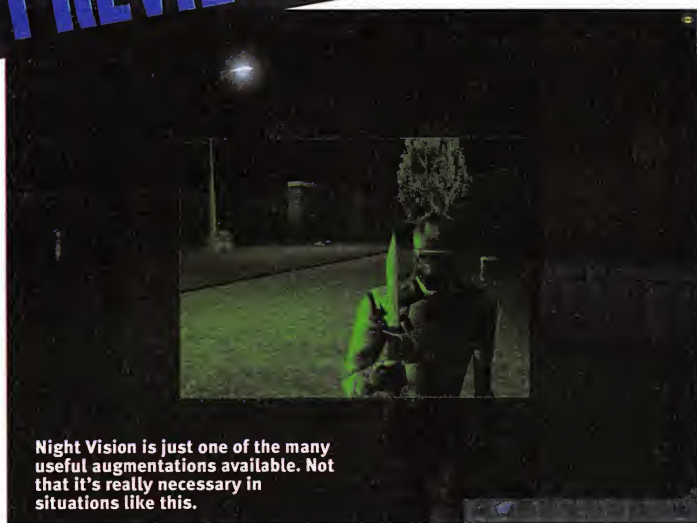
treatment for a pandemic virus dubbed 'Grey Death'. But as the game progresses, the terrorists' cause seems to possess some merit, and UNATCO grows ever more bloodthirsty. Privy to numerous conspiracy theories, Denton must make crucial decisions on who he should trust, and eventually choose which cause he will fight for.

Using a heavily modified incarnation of the Unreal engine, the game excels in the pleasing visuals department. However, many of the alterations made by ION Storm's programming team are not immediately apparent. As Programmer Al Yarusso details, "Most of the features we've added to the engine have been RPG-centric. Since Unreal is a straightforward shooter, it doesn't have support for a sophisticated inventory system or the skills and augmentation systems your character has in Deus Ex. We've added blended animations,

realtime lip-syncing, advanced AI, a powerful conversation system (complete with a stand-alone editor), a travelling flag system to save the game state between maps, a sophisticated user-interface library that's used heavily by the many UI screens in the game, and countless other improvements."

Water coolers

Walking through the reception area of a UNATCO compound, small cleaner bots roved the floor and followed in my wake, presumably cleaning up errant dirt and dust particles I had inadvertently tracked in from the lawn outside. The same reception area also gave me an insight into Deus Ex's NPC AI. As I approached the front desk, the bored security guard, fixated by his PC monitor, ignored me completely. Frustrated, I toyed with the lamp beside him and was rewarded with a stern warning to leave it alone, as well as



Night Vision is just one of the many useful augmentations available. Not that it's really necessary in situations like this.



JC Denton
Mind if I ask you a few questions?

instructions on whom I was supposed to meet for my post-mission debriefing. Leaving the guard to his own devices, I headed down an expansive hallway where I found a water cooler. As I drank

"...HEAVY WEAPONS INCLUDE SUCH NOISY DELIGHTS AS FLAMETHROWERS"

from it, I was surprised to hear the familiar "bloop" and see a large, almost iridescent bubble rise to the top of the water bottle. While these incidents occurred within a timeframe of only a few seconds, they are illustrative of the already-impressive and highly immersive qualities of Deus Ex's environments.



Search Liberty Island and you'll stumble upon the famous statue's head, victim of a terrorist attack.

Heading Toward Realism

One of the game's earliest missions occurs within the grounds of New York City's Liberty Island, the location of the world-famous Statue of Liberty. Although, sans head, Lady Liberty herself looked more than a little different to when I last saw her. It was obvious, though, that the game's artists had taken a lot of care in accurately recreating the island and its environs. That the majority of game locations were recreated from blueprints, maps, and photographs bears testament to the lengths that ION Storm has gone to in the interests of realism and suspension of disbelief.



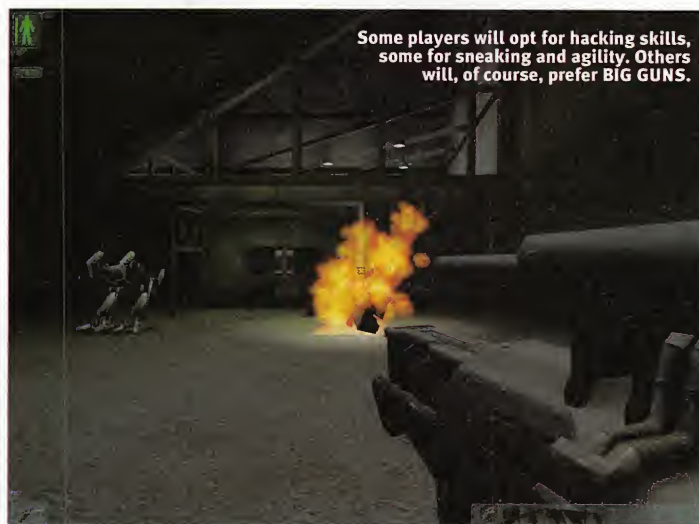
Character creation, while less spectacular or memorable than System Shock 2's method, is distinctly straightforward. Selecting the character's basic appearance and name are the extent to which the player can meddle with personal traits. Traditional attributes like Strength, Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma have been abandoned in favour of device-oriented specialisations in the use of weapons and equipment. A specialisation in Computers allows the player to hack into PCs and ATMs, while Environmental Tracking grants additional benefits from the use of Adaptive Armour, HazMat Suits and Rebreathers. Technical skills enable the player to hack into security systems and the like, while the benefits of Swimming, Medical and Lockpicking skills should be obvious. Weapon proficiencies improve accuracy and reloading times, and reduce movement penalties accrued when the player uses heavy weapons.

The game's selection of

weapons is quite diverse, with many types within each basic category. Low-tech weapons include knives, swords, crossbows, shock prods and pepper spray canisters. Of course, knives aren't the most efficient means of taking down adversaries, but they are always preferable to bare fists. Pistols include the standard issue romm and its stealth variants, and the Rifle category encompasses a number of assault rifle models, as well as sniper rifles and shotguns. Incendiary and EMP grenades, and proximity explosives fall under the Demolitions designation. Most destructive of all are the Heavy weapons, which include such noisy delights as flamethrowers, LAW rockets and the infamous GEP rifle. Interestingly, some weapons can be used in conjunction with others, offering a host of nefarious ways to deal out death. Immobilising a foe using pepper spray or a shock prod leaves them open to attack for several seconds. Dispatching said foe with a

Nano-Aug What?

An interesting concept introduced in Deus Ex is that of Nano-augmentation: a process whereby nanobots implanted within the player's body can be programmed to perform specific tasks (using the applicable firmware). This can enable the player to move faster, jump higher, see at night or discern detailed information about targets simply by looking at them. While several other Nanoaugmentations will become available over the course of the game, there is a limit to the number that the player can utilise, making difficult choices between certain types inevitable.



Some players will opt for hacking skills, some for sneaking and agility. Others will, of course, prefer BIG GUNS.



Oh no, not another scientific experiment gone wrong! Didn't we learn anything from Half-Life?



silenced pistol shot to the head is virtually risk-free and more humane, but leaving a grenade at his feet and beating a hasty retreat is much more satisfying.

Consequences

Despite the wide selection of weapons, a more cautious approach to the achievement of specific mission objectives can sometimes be beneficial. Granted, a callous disregard for human life and a healthy dose of that self-preservation instinct can prove useful when tackling marauding assailants, but the wholesale slaughter of targets of opportunity may bring with it a premature termination of the mission (and the player's life). Instead, devising Machiavellian schemes and judiciously using stealth may prove more rewarding. Deus Ex's AI is geared such that NPCs remember actions taken by the player in the past, and respond accordingly.

In short, every action within the game has a consequence, which is something Spector is particularly pleased with. "Deus

Ex is a game about character development in which all of your character choices are expressible, minute-to-minute, in gameplay and every choice you make has a price," he enthuses. "Everything has consequences and nothing comes for free. We want players thinking constantly about why they're doing what they're doing. We want them thinking how their actions might affect the people who live in our gameworld. A story filled with interesting characters with interesting lives has a chance of giving each player's actions some meaning."

In its present state, Deus Ex is less than perfect. Weapons need some refinement, and the AI of some NPCs needs tweaking. But with such a solid foundation, that Deus Ex could prove to be anything less than an A-grade title verges on inconceivable. However, only time will tell if Deus Ex lives up to its enormous potential - a wait that most find virtually intolerable. Thankfully, then, it's only a mere couple of months away.

Brett Robinson



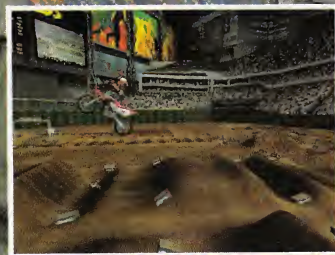
***PREVIEWS**

MOTOCROSS

AFTER WOWING GAMERS WITH THEIR FIRST EFFORT, RAINBOW STUDIOS ARE BACK WITH MORE TRICKS, MORE SPEED AND EVEN MORE FUN!



Faster than a speeding train, able to leap small buildings in a single jump, more powerful than a superhero... it's *Motocross Madness 2* Man!



MADNESS 2

DETAILS

- **Genre:** Motocross Sim
- **Players:** 1-Multi
- **Developer:** Rainbow Studios
- **Publisher:** Microsoft
- **Due:** June

***** That's right folks, it's time to virtually break your legs all over again! Motocross Madness 2, the sequel to the award-winning Motocross Madness is heading our way. A racing game with a heavy focus on action and stunts, the original Motocross Madness captured the true spirit of the fearless nutbags who ride in top-level motorbike competitions. Motocross Madness 2 looks set to improve on the original, with crazy new tricks, bone-jarring crashes and even more of the red-linin' dirt-bike action that proved so addictive in Motocross Madness 1. Let's get racing shall we...

Big maps!

To start with - and this really hits you between the eyes - the graphics of MM2 look absolutely spectacular. Some sections and landscapes look almost photo-realistic. Rainbow Studios' has somehow managed to boost the polygon count in the bikes and riders from 250 to 1250, meaning that the detail is impeccable - right down to the stitching in the protective gear on the riders and the spokes and chain on the bike. The outdoor terrains haven't been neglected either, with up to 100,000 shrubs and objects in some of the maps. As well as looking spectacular, these areas are up to four times larger than in the original - something to think about as you jam across the Arizona desert with the wind at your back. In addition to the

shrub-tastic environments, other items like flags, rocks, and complete trailer parks have been included to round out the 'hoonin' round the boondocks' feel of the outdoor arenas. On other maps, you'll encounter other vehicles, freight trains, and even tractors in the farmland areas.

The sounds setup of MM2 has also been rejigged, with true 3D positional sound on offer. Finally, the ability to tell the difference between Yamaha and Suzuki!

Painful

But let's not lie. One of the best things about the original Motocross Madness was pulling off insane tricks and bailing with a sickening thud. MM2 promises even more mental action and brand new public liability insurance premium rise inducing stunts! The last few years has seen an explosion of brand new stunts in the Motocross world, and many of these have been included in MM2. Expect to see the Cordova, the aptly-named Heart Attack, the Lazyboy and my personal favourite, the Seat Grab. Believe me, nothing says 'never ever going to celebrate Father's Day' like screwing up the Seat Grab. Bonuses for multiple stunts are there - tempting you - and combos appear to be slightly easier to link. The great news is that the moves you learned in the original are still there, but the new tricks will definitely keep you busy. In hospital.

An RPG?

Something that will definitely add to the longevity of MM2 is the addition of two new racing modes: Pro-Circuit racing, and Enduro racing. The most exciting of these is the career-styled Pro-Circuit. Basically, you start out as



"SOME SECTIONS AND LANDSCAPES LOOK ALMOST PHOTO-REALISTIC."



a rookie with a really crappy bike. As you progress you earn cash for winning races and performing stunts. Adding a small RPG element to the game, you can use your cash to upgrade your bike and continue to chase fame. Race your way through the Enduro, Baja, and National events to finally reach the Supercross. Then it's sponsorships, groupies and spots on the Extreme Games. But don't forget to stash some cash for the inevitable repairs and medical expenses. Enduro seems to be included only to show off the expansive maps that are in MM2. You just race on, and on, and on.

Competitive

One of the most exciting ways to play MM2 is online, and it's just another area where it has been improved out of sight. An online scoring system allows players to gain 'win points' which go towards the multiplayer rankings. Leagues, ladders, teams and tournaments will be installed, with the ultimate

honour being a ranking in the Top 100 riders online. Players with this honour get a personalised number plate indicating their ranking for every online race. So if you're lining up for a bash on the net and see a low number in your group - don't expect to be chalking up an easy victory.

Motocross Madness 2 was one of the most exciting titles shown at the recent Gamestock event in Seattle, and looked to be surprisingly close to completion. The 3D Track Editor was not on show, but is the same system that the MM2 team uses to create the tracks in the game. Excited yet? Better yet, bike and racer skins are now customisable, allowing you to get that hot pink racing suit you've always wanted. Of course, any further tweaking will definitely be welcomed by those with lower end computers, but this little rev-head is sitting on the grid waiting for his copy as soon as possible. Seat Grab with a twist, here I come...

Dan Ziffer



The End of the Earth

Even when you've just been shown a fantastic game, there's always a little twinge at the back of every gamers brain that says "How can I screw with this?". Obviously, the large worlds in MM2 do have an end - just as the Vikings originally predicted with the Earth. Nearing the edge of the maps, you'll see a massive, near-vertical cliff. Surprisingly, despite the 80 degree angle, your rider can make it up easily with a decent head of steam. Arrive at the top and everything

seems normal. But look at those flat textures over there, they don't seem to have as much detail as the... POP! Suddenly, you and your beloved bike are pushed about zoom into the air, flying back towards the centre of the course. Bouncing with a force that would crush mere mortals, you bounce several times before slowing to a grind and re-appearing on your bike. And revving off towards the cliff to try it again. And again.

REVIEW CONTENTS

MORE GAMING GOODNESS THAN YOU COULD POINT YOUR FINGER AT AND SAY "BANG!"

THE PCPP CREW

AND THEIR PREFERRED NAPPY OPTIONS



March Stepnik

What I'm playing:

Grand Prix 3, Quake 3, Ultima Online

Nappies - cloth or disposable?

Neither. Run free! Run free!



Dan Ziffer

What I'm playing:

Quake 3, Motocross Madness 2, Crimson Skies

Nappies - cloth or disposable?

Cloth. It's better for the environment. Then again, I don't have to clean up



Malcolm Campbell

What I'm playing:

Castlevania: Symphony of the Night

Nappies - cloth or disposable?

Cloth. When was the last time you wore a pair of plastic boxer shorts?



David Wildgoose

What I'm playing:

Planescape Torment, Messiah, Planetfall

Nappies - cloth or disposable?

Cloth. Because I'm nice.



John Dewhurst

What I'm playing:

Battlezone 2, Planescape Torment, Spider Solitaire

Nappies - cloth or disposable?

Disposable. The "environment" was a marketing catchphrase from 1989.



Brett Robinson

What I'm playing:

Planescape Torment, Gran Turismo 2, Deus Ex

Nappies - cloth or disposable?

Cloth. More time-consuming, but environmentally friendly.



Maj. Des McNicholas

What I'm playing:

F/A 18 Hornet, Unreal Tournament, Rogue Spear

Nappies - cloth or disposable?

We don't wear nappies in the Army - fishnets occasionally, nappies never!



Edward Fox

What I'm playing:

Superbikes 2000, GP 500, The Sims

Nappies - cloth or disposable?

Cloth, the environmental and comfortable choice! Just make sure a gas mask is handy come cleaning time!



Christian Read

What I'm playing:

Planescape Torment

Nappies - cloth or disposable?

Who cares? Babies are terrible. But disposable if I had to. Hell with the environment.



Hugh Norton-Smith

What I'm playing:

Soldier of Fortune, 10Six, UFO: Enemy Unknown

Nappies - cloth or disposable?

Don't care, as long as it's soft, strong and thoroughly absorbent.



James Cottee

What I'm playing:

Civ Call To Power, Q3, Digger, Alley Cat, 3 Demon

Nappies - cloth or disposable?

Are we not all disposable in the end, especially in this cruel business we call publishing?



Timothy C. Best

What I'm playing:

Planescape Torment, Nox

Nappies - cloth or disposable?

Bob disposes of whole bodies, what are the chances of him hanging on to nappies until washday?



Bob

What I'm playing:

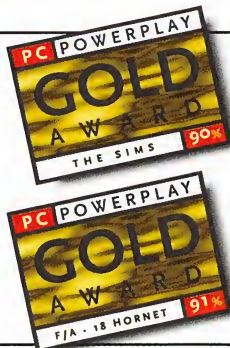
God (only joking boss)

Nappies - cloth or disposable?

Nappy? It's a loincloth you uncultured moron!

OOPS!

Last month we had a bit of a mishap with the gold awards for The Sims and F/A - 18 Hornet. Here are the correct badges. Please cut them out and glue them in the appropriate places.



THE PCPP REVIEW SYSTEM

NEED: The bare minimum system requirements to get the game up and running at a playable speed. Don't even think about the game unless you have this system.

WANT: The ideal system requirements for the game. You can still play it well without this setup, but this will allow you to see the game as it was meant to be.

FOR: The major reasons why you'll like the reviewed game.

AGAINST: The major reasons why you won't. Read both and decide which seems the most appropriate and important to you.

95+ **PLATINUM AWARD**
A virtually flawless title, one that expands our gaming horizons while providing a supremely playable experience. The absolute best there is. Everyone will love this game.

94-90 **GOLD AWARD**
A classic. Either an unquestionable example of superiority within its genre or a groundbreaking title that will soon be setting trends.

89-80 A strong title that's hard to fault. Eminently playable and likely to remain on the hard drive for some time. But perhaps not the best in its field.

79-60 Competent and playable. A few gameplay flaws or unoriginality hold this game back from a higher rating. For fans of the genre.

59-40 Decidedly average. Probably either full of bugs or lacking some crucial features. But, most of all, probably boring.

39-0 A dog. Bad, shamelessly unoriginal, cheap and horrible. Avoid.

ISSUE 48 REVIEWS

58 Messiah

Is Bob the Earth's saviour or another fallen angel?

62 Battlezone 2: Combat Commander

The original and best action strategy game returns.

66 Croc 2

It's like, you know, for kids.

68 Ford Racing

Crossing rivers in Norway... Oh, that's fjord. Sorry!

69 Football World Manager 2000

Relegation looms.

70 Nox

If it's 2D, it must be Westwood.

74 Invictus

Roleplaying strategy Roman-style.

76 NASCAR Revolution

The fourth Nascar game in six months. Enough, we cry!

78 Rising Sun

Where the world's a hexagon.

80 Ultima Online: Discovery Edition

"Time to kick ass down under"? It's ARSE, you idiots.

82 Airport Inc.

For all the aviating accountants.

83 FA-52 Alligator

The sequel to KA-52 Ostrich. Maybe.

84 Army Men in Space

Hang on, Des, whaddya mean it's not a military sim?

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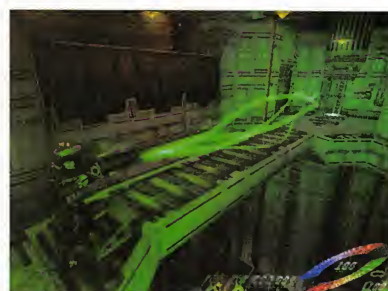
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MESSIAH

●Genre: Possess 'em up ●Players: 1 ●Developer: Shiny ●Publisher: Interplay ●Distributor: Interplay ●Price: \$89.95 ●Rating: MA15+ ●Available: Now
 ●Need: PII, 32MB RAM, 8xCD, 3D Videocard (D3D, Glide) ●Want: PIII 450, 64MB RAM, Joypad ●URL: www.messiah.com

IS THERE ANY TRUTH TO THE RUMOUR THAT BOB WAS NAMED AFTER THE GUY IN TWIN PEAKS WHO POSSESSED LAURA PALMER'S FATHER? AHH... THOUGHT NOT.



As much as it pains me to quote a bunch of geriatric comedians, I fear I must. Here goes credibility: "He's not the messiah, he's just a very naughty boy." Much to my annoyance, Monty Python has pre-empted my response to Shiny's latest weird 'n' wonderful trip through Dave Perry's gameplay bazaar. It sums up Messiah too well.

Bob is no gaming messiah. The past two years has seen Messiah generate a level of hype it couldn't possibly live up to. Indeed, nothing less than a revelation would likely result in disappointment. Despite its undoubted polish, the game engine once touted as revolutionary - with its cutting-edge graphic techniques (tessellation and deformation, you might have heard of them) - just doesn't look that impressive, at least not in comparison to the mighty Quake 3. And, in the wake of The Nomad Soul, the game's premise - possessing a host of beings in order to take advantage of their specific characteristics - isn't quite as inspired as it first seemed and, in fact, the puzzles elements at times recall the venerable Lost Vikings or even Lemmings.

The second half of the equation is just as accurate: Bob is a very naughty boy. The amount of sadistic mayhem he creates immediately marks him down as a less-than-angelic child (see It's Just A Bit Of Fun). But it's precisely through this guilty pleasure that the game succeeds. Away from its over-hyped features, Messiah is a





The dial (bottom right) indicates both Bob's and his host's health.

wicked triumph of witty, surreal, clever, and just plain bonkers, gameplay.

Heavenly Creatures

God wants Bob to clean up something for him. Apparently, Earth - that soiled nappy of a planet - is in pretty bad shape. So, our cherubic hero heads down to terra firma, albeit with considerable reluctance. Okay, so what actually happens is that God pushes Bob from the



heavenly clouds, causing him to plummet to the ground and land on a cop, taking possession of the hapless

"...GRADUATE FROM COP TO NINJA BABE TO SCIENTIST TO PROSTITUTE..."

law enforcement officer in the process.

Once earth-bound, Bob is highly vulnerable. The various citizens of this relentlessly grim future world aren't particularly fond of strangers, especially ones with wings and a halo. Armed guards and other security officers will try to kill Bob on sight, though thankfully others will just shoo him

away or ignore him altogether. On his own, Bob is almost completely ineffectual. He can open some doors (and only those that don't have restricted access), but little else of note. Press the fire button and he'll merely cock his little index finger and

say "Bang". Sure, it's cute and all, but an efficient protective measure it ain't. Thus, Bob's best defence is sneaking and staying out of trouble. There are no shadows to hide in, but the ubiquitous crates, barrels and bits of machinery provide ample cover from hostile eyes. It's perhaps fortunate, then, that Bob has one other durable and incredibly useful talent: possession. Guide him behind someone then hit the jump button and he'll take control of said being, with Bob's spirit merging with his new host. Thus begins Bob's remarkable journey to save the world from itself. Along the way he'll graduate from cop to ninja babe to scientist to prostitute, with each allowing Bob access to their



MEET YOUR HOSTS

At first I had been concerned that for a game with such a distinctively charismatic hero, too little time is spent actually controlling him. For long periods of the game Bob is present in spirit only, hidden from view in the body of one of the many possessable beings. Emotional attachment to the game's main character is one of the great strength's of a thirdperson perspective, so why had Shiny decided to waste this perfect opportunity? Perhaps in another game from another developer this would have been a valid criticism. However, Shiny has imbued each character with sufficient personality that you don't really mind it when Bob disappears.



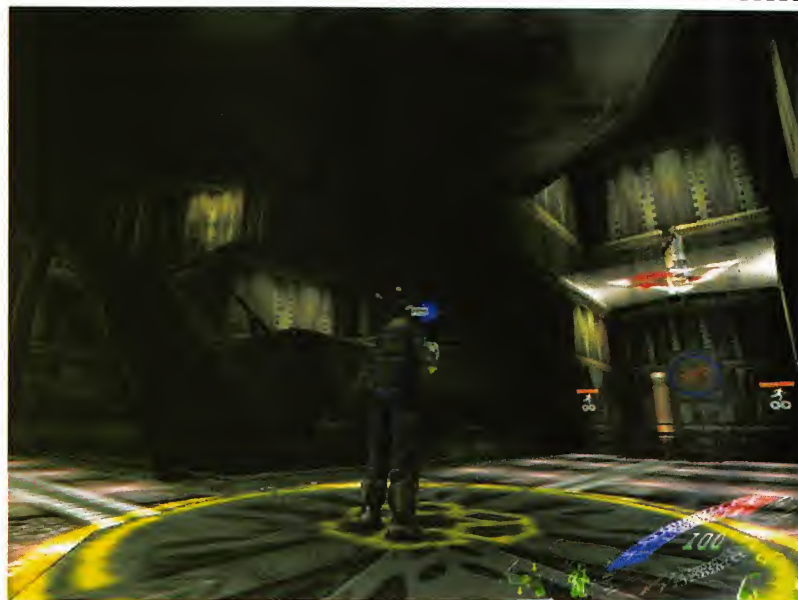
IT'S JUST A BIT OF FUN

Although you control a toddler in a nappy, there's a surprisingly full agenda of maiming, killing, frying, shooting, torturing and general hurting to be gleefully experienced. Bob kills in such a childish way it's as if he's almost oblivious to the carnage he causes - a malicious yet knowing innocence. His demeanour makes you suspect he believes he can get away with all this because he looks incapable of it. It's perversely enjoyable (or enjoyably perverse) to, for instance, guide a radiation worker to the edge of enormous pit and make him jump to his death, "extracting" Bob at the last moment so he backflips to safety. Or better still, you can wait until just before the worker hits the ground to escape his body, thus gaining the perfect view of his (not at all) unfortunate demise. Messiah definitely brings out the sadist in us all.



If only there were waitresses like this in the cafes in Surry Hills.

unique talents. Prostitutes can cause male characters to forget their duty and let Bob enter otherwise off-limits areas, while the aforementioned radiation workers' protective suits enable them to survive toxic hazards. And although a number of characters are proficient at varying forms of combat, some have the additional ability to enter sniper mode (a continuation of one of the coolest features of



"Behind you!"



It's a lot of fun being this big lug.

Shiny's previous game, MDK) and take down enemies with a single shot to the head.

Swap shop

What's really clever about all this character swapping, though, is that each problem or situation you encounter must be solved on two levels. One, you need to decide which character you want to use to negotiate the area - it's rarely a matter of following just one obvious path. Two, you then have to work out exactly how you're going to get Bob to possess the necessary character - and this is never as straightforward as you expect, either!

So often games are criticised for being too linear, typically without much thought given as to how or why. It's an old standby for game reviewers everywhere, and a complaint that's been unfairly directed at Messiah from several quarters. (Though you'd have to question what they based their remarkably early reviews on, but that's another issue entirely.) But linearity in itself isn't necessarily a bad thing, as Messiah proves with ease.

Bob's progression through each level - from one situation to the next, and from puzzle to puzzle - is highly linear; what isn't at all linear is the spaces in between. Messiah grants the player the

THE ILLUSION OF LIFE

Despite its undoubted polish and imposing technical credentials, Messiah does lack visual impact. Though technically impressive, the environments suffer from a certain tiredness: we've all seen this kind of gritty futuristic world many times before. The sheer scope of some locations is enough to make you pause in admiration, but overall the wow factor doesn't really register. Away from the architecture, though, and a brief glimpse of the character animation will convince even the sceptics of the Messiah engine's power. A considerable portion of the cast's charisma is attributable solely to the exceptional quality of the animation. With the likes of Aladdin, Earthworm Jim, and MDK on his resume, Dave Perry has long been responsible for setting the benchmark for videogame animation. With Messiah that tradition continues.





freedom to fill in the gaps himself. The solution to each problem is left in the hands of the player's own creativity.

Because of this, *Messiah* is initially overwhelming. You're liable to feel a significant degree of confusion, at least during the early stages of the game until you get your bearings. As the game's multitude of distinct characters and weirdly futuristic locations pass by, the clouds of doubt come rolling in. You'll be asking yourself questions: Am I doing this properly? Was that the best way to get through there? Is this the right direction?

It does take a while to get to grips with how *Messiah* has been designed. Even then, it will take slightly longer to fully appreciate just how much freedom this design does actually offer. And finally the confusion will return as you try to decide how you're going to solve each problem or negotiate each situation.

The unforgiven

However, *Messiah* isn't the perfect game, of course. The frustration level could be a significant barrier for some gamers' enjoyment. Unforgiving is the best way to describe the AI: there'll be plenty of occasions where you're sure Bob hasn't been spotted, but finds himself under attack anyway. Many are the times, too, when Bob will barely scrape through by the seat of his absorbent pants. Combat is generally



Messiah is "by the seat of your pants" gaming. It's no wonder the protagonist wears nappies.

something to avoid at all costs, unless your host is well-armed and full of health. In the heat of battle, you'll often be frantically hopping from body to body in the hope of finding yourself in the last man standing. Survival in such instances is too often a sheer fluke. An adrenaline rush? Yes. Satisfying gameplay? No. Still, at least it's an option.

Which ironically, by illustrating one of the weakest aspects of the game, brings me back to its crowning achievement. *Messiah* gives you options. And with this, the periods of intense frustration soon segue into

moments and sequences of sheer brilliance. The latter occurring when the game gives you the freedom to accomplish certain tasks in multiple ways. Once done, you find yourself marvelling at your own ingenuity rather than that of the designers. Something that Shiny would consider the ultimate compliment, I'm sure.

Simultaneously maddening and exhilarating, disorientating and breathtaking, *Messiah* is definitely one of a kind. If you're sick of the same old tired gameplay formulas, then I urge you to take possession of this any way you can.

David Wildgoose

PCPP

FOR: Bold, innovative gameplay. Peerless animation. Bob is utterly adorable.

AGAINST: Can become quite frustrating thanks to the unforgiving AI. Visually just a touch too generic as well.

PLUS

http://www.weebies.com/web_page/nappy_fold_newborn.html

Messiah will make you want to start a family, so here are some tips on nappy folding.

89

BATTLEZONE 2: Combat Commander

●Genre: Firstperson Action/Strategy ●Players: 1-4 (TCP/IP), 1-6 (LAN) ●Developer: Pandemic Studios ●Publisher: Activision ●Distributor: Activision ●Price: \$89.95 ●Rating: G8
●Need: P200, 64MB RAM, 600MB HDD, 3D Videocard ●Want: PIII, 128MB RAM ●URL: www.pandemicstudios.com

HANG ON, WHERE ARE THE GREEN VECTOR GRAPHICS? OH, SORRY, WE'RE STILL THINKING ABOUT THE OTHER BATTLEZONE... WHICH BATTLEZONE 2 STILL HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH, OKAY?

TIPS

- The first half dozen missions are basically training, so take the opportunity to try different things. Build whatever you can and explore the possibilities.
- If you're ever on foot, try to move as quietly as possible since you are very vulnerable. If you have any problems with wildlife, use your sniper rifle so as not to arouse suspicion from Scion craft.
- Like you've learnt from hours of Quake - strafe, strafe, strafe! Scion craft are strong head-on, so get out of the way! Try to work in conjunction with the gun towers to knock out stronger craft.

Genre mixing is so common these days, it's getting hard to remember when your adventure games didn't have action elements (aside from the crappy action elements anyway), or when strategy games were only strategy games. One reason for this is that finally these genre-free titles are starting to come good. The particular favourite at PowerPlay, System Shock 2, is a good example of this. Game designers are looking to reach a much greater market and hence are making games with as wide an appeal as possible.



Despite the scene depicted here, the action in Battlezone 2 is decidedly ground-based.

The big challenge for game designers of these titles is clear: make games that offer lots to do but don't get lost amongst it all. Missing the wood for the trees, sort of thing. Battlezone 2: Combat Commander presents a healthy balance between the strategy and action, which is hardly surprising since the earlier Battlezone was the first to do it properly.

The FPS/strategy combination works because it lends a little excitement to your planning and a little organisation to your random and gratuitous destruction. Certainly one of the more workable "cocktails" of gaming, it has produced some interesting titles: the original Battlezone, Uprising, Urban Assault and

Machines. We hardly need to mention the countless other titles that include varying degrees of micro-management in battle which arise from this trend. Myth and its sequel spring to mind, as well as the upcoming Warcraft III. Battlezone 2 aims to give the player control over almost everything on screen.

Join the dark side

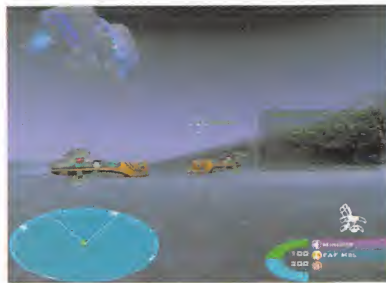
The story of the single player mission goes like this: you are John Cooke, a private in the International Space Defense Force or ISDF. You always knew that space was the place for you. After becoming an ace pilot, you quickly rose to prominence in the force.

SHIPE ME UP

As the pilot of a craft, you are able to leave it at any time. This can be voluntary if you need to enter a building or use a device, like say the gun towers. If, however, your craft is destroyed you are automatically ejected from the craft and parachute slowly to the ground. The problem is how do you get a craft again since they're not lying around much of the time?

The solution involves the sniper rifle with which you are equipped. If you are quick enough with your sniper rifle to shoot the cockpit or an enemy craft, you can commandeer it for yourself. This takes a bit of skill and a lot of luck. It's a nice touch in adding continuity to the game.





The cross-hair is not only used for aiming weapons but for selecting units and destinations.

“...A LITTLE ORGANISATION TO YOUR RANDOM DESTRUCTION...”

Then you discover that your father is a general of the Dark Side... sorry, wrong story. As a private serving close to the generals in an interplanetary battle with the Scion alien force, you are faced with conflicting orders and sinister motivations. What seems like a military operation quickly turns into a personal vendetta for your superior, General Braddock. What's more important - the men or the mission? There are strange goings-on and plot twists in Battlezone 2 that help add some drama. It's a pretty solid story and you will find some sympathy for the victims of war - often your own allies.

Once you've decided to make a game involving action and planning



elements, then you have to reconcile these two quite different activities. Most obvious is the problem of interface. A lot of things will be happening, so that if you can't control everything around you quickly and easily, you're dead in the water. In this respect, Pandemic has done an extremely good job. There are keyboard shortcuts for everything and easy access to your forces and buildings, no matter where you are on the map. Cleverly, there are also multiple ways of gaining control over units - picking them out from the HUD or manual selection if they are right in front of you!

The second consideration is pacing. Even with a great interface, when you have to concentrate on at least two things at a time, you need enough time to handle everything. Pandemic's remedy to this problem is to alter the game speed. So understandably, the action in Battlezone II is a little bit slower than what you might expect - although many of these tank-based games seem overly sluggish - at least this time it's for your benefit! This gives you the opportunity to face attacking units first-hand, as well as directing your troops around the battlefield and managing your base. Even as the game stands, it's certainly a challenge to co-ordinate all of your forces.

Bloody scavengers!

The basic game design is well balanced, with no particular bias towards either multiplayer or the single player



ACTUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT!

The Recycler is the centre of your base. It allows the construction of all the other buildings and units. But you need something to build with! Scavengers are your source of "income", that being bio-metal. You need to go out and collect these resources as quick as possible, so you can build more units, etc. There are the issues of protecting your scavenging operations as well.

This does make for some interesting situations in multiplay. Those who have played Homeworld will know EXACTLY what these scenarios are like...



Kill the pilot and steal his vehicle.



missions. In the single player missions, you are afforded much less time to micro-manage your base, with personal orders frequently sent to you. These usually involve racing off to aid someone or carry out a particular task. Also, most missions don't offer much breathing space - you need to build, scavenge, defend and the rest. This makes for exciting albeit marginally slower gaming.

It also puts a little more emphasis on the action side of proceedings.

A game that has such a wide scope is more than likely to have some shortcoming. The firstperson engine here is a little on the poor side. You can't expect something comparable to Q3A but still, when you step out of a vehicle you notice how ordinary control becomes. While the craft feel smooth and realistic, firstperson feels like it's got only one speed - trudge! Also, the AI of your "wingmen" is really quite ordinary. Being caught in crossfire is a common and all too annoying occurrence.

There is a lot that is great about Battlezone 2, even though it does offer marginally less in specific areas to make a satisfactory whole. It's a good game and certainly worth the time of combat strategy fans, but perhaps its charms may only be appreciated by a select few. It's hard enough to make a good game (seeing how many dogs there are) without the worry of trying to make two at the same time. Thankfully, Battlezone 2 does convincingly avoid a nasty jack-of-all-trades/master-of-none situation and emerges without doubt as a solid title.

John Dewhurst

PLUS
www.thegourmetdoctor.com
 Private Cooke, eh? What about your very own personal chef on the web. Hey presto - take from here, John!



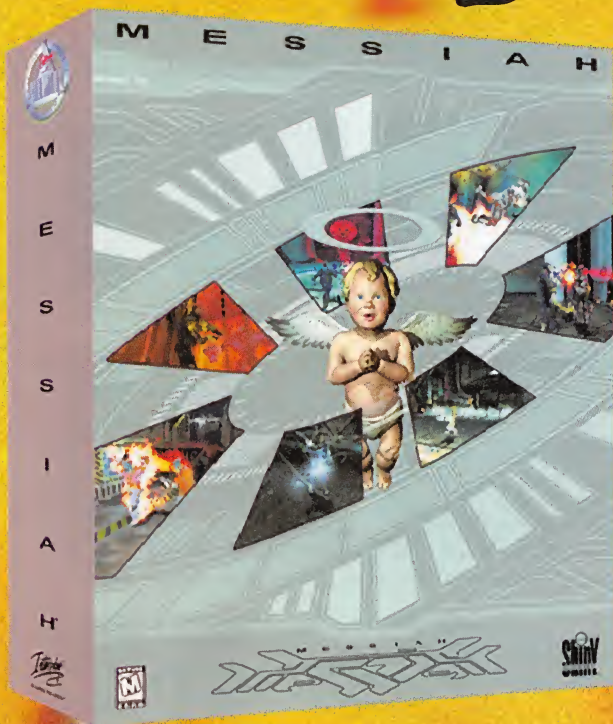
PCPP

FOR: Good variety in gaming - convincing action and strategy elements, great story.

AGAINST: Average firstperson control, poor AI of supporting offensive units.

85

play hard



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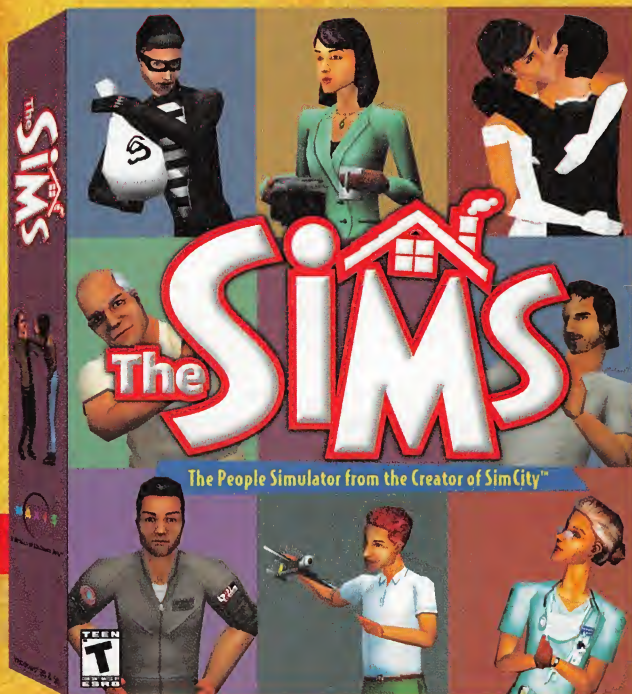
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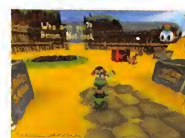
CUTE LITTLE CROCODILES? WHAT'LL THEY THINK OF NEXT?



The one problem it has in this respect is that if you slow down at the wrong area, or get stuck, the camera angles won't follow your character and you can be stuck with a difficult perspective to work from. It's not common, but certainly happens enough to count as a design flaw. Certainly there is no control of camera placement.



But the best part of *Croc 2* is the music. The opening mariachi style music performed by a Gobbo band is the coolest thing, complete with groovy horns and clever Spanish guitar. Instead of mindless happy little electronica for level music, there are interesting tunes that change to match



more. Very much set in the mould of the old games mentioned before, it's a classy, fun and suprisingly challenging game. Croc lives with uber-cute little Gobbos who seem to be involved in some sort of friendly yet quite blood-curdlingly dangerous rivalry with their neighbours. Croc volunteers to enter 40 varied locales such as mines, jungles, boat races and odd seaside places to help rescue his endangered pals, retrieve stolen objects or just have fun. To do this you'll have to jump ropes, race across chasms, fight monsters,

First of all, you have to understand the game is quite insane. For adults at least. Set firmly and unapologetically for a target market of younger kiddies, it uses lots of techniques that childrens' programs utilise. Bright colours, nonsensical pre-verbal characters (hell, you should buy this game just to hear the weird goddamn non-language the Gobbos use), bright characters, no death and non-threatening enemies all add up to a very odd world to interact with.

**“... COLLECTING DIAMONDS TO BUY
MAGICAL LOLLIES ...”**

thrash, kick and stomp, all the while collecting diamonds to buy magical lollies from Swap Meet Pete, who is so freakishly spoken as to cause chills. It's not exactly a genre buster, but it's solid enough for what it is.

Graphically it's pleasing, with nice design, enough variations between levels and suprisingly well done lighting. The engine copes very nicely with huge jumps, and swinging on ropes is pleasingly vertiginous. It's fast, fun and makes pretty extensive use of the 3D variations of the platform style.

the mood of the game. Happy sunlight levels have happy sunlight music, the races have high BPM tracks and the mines have a more ominous tones. And Croc's insane jabbering, while at first quite maniacal, does have a certain charm.

Croc 2 is not sophisticated adult gaming. But as a game for the kids, a bit of fluff to have fun with after 45 hours straight of RTS or Arena gaming, it is certainly appropriate. Bright, fast, fun 3D action that's great for the kids.

Christian Read



ppp

FOR: Super-sweet platform gaming with an decent helping of style. Gotta love the Gobbos!

AGAINST: Flawed camera design and control.

PLUS

www.animals.com
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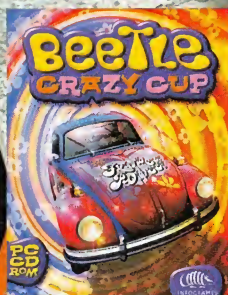
78

PC
CD
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ROAD RAVE!



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Beetle CRAZY CUP


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FORD RACING

●Genre: Arcade Racing ●Players: 1 ●Developer: Empire Sports ●Publisher: Empire Interactive ●Distributor: QV Software ●Price: ?? ●Rating: G ●Available: Now
 ●Need: P200 MMX, 32MB RAM, 250+ HDD, 8xCD, 4MB 3D Videocard (D3D, Glide) ●Want: PII 266, 64MB RAM, 300 HDD, 12xCD, 8MB 3D Videocard, 3D Soundcard (EAX) ●URL: www.empire.co.uk

WE'D LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO APOLOGISE FOR THE EXECRABLE PUN ON P57. THE CULPRIT HAS BEEN DISCIPLINED RUTHLESSLY AND SADISTICALLY.



When the Ford Motor Company went looking for someone to simulate their vehicles in a racing environment they went to Empire Interactive Software. The collaboration of these two giants in their respective industries has blossomed into a neat package, aptly titled Ford Racing.

An original concept in motor simulations, Ford Racing offers the chance to jump in any Ford vehicle from the 97 Fiesta to the 2000 Mondeo and compete ontrack. Modes of driving include single race, and the ever-popular career mode, which offers the

"...THE VEHICLE CAN BE SEEN ROCKING AND ROLLING AS IT SPEEDS..."

chance of driving the cars in a series of league and cup races, eventually being offered the chance to drive for a professional team. By winning races and progressing through the classes, new cars are acquired, yet only after winning all events in each class does the next one become available.

Flipping the bird

The physics modelling for each car is represented quite well, but the lack of any in-car view dramatically reduces the ability to judge this correctly. From an exterior perspective, the vehicle can be seen rocking and rolling as it speeds, slows and turns, and if pushed too hard will even flip! The learning curve is not terribly steep, but does require some climbing; if you're like me, driving any



And if you look really closely you can see the dog on the back seat.

simulation from a chase view as opposed to behind the wheel doesn't exactly come naturally.

The audio of each vehicle engine is reproduced well. The Ford Ka, which looks more like a Pokemon than an automobile, produces a relaxed low power hum; where-as the beefy GT90

offers a mechanical melody generally aligned with the racetrack. Accompanying the engines are the traditional racing noises of screeching tyres and grinding metal, each adding to the audio effect.

Bash and barge

The computer drivers are extremely aggressive, a demeanour being increasingly adopted for the AI of racing sims these days (much to our pleasure - well, sometimes anyway). In anything from the oddly named Ka to

grunty four-wheel drive Explorer, the CPU pilots will try to win at all costs. Barging, shoving, and basically cutting you off any chance they get are just some of the tricks in their repertoire. They also have a nasty habit of making you pay for your mistakes, especially during the last lap of a race.

Visually the cars appear realistic and resemble the real thing. The textures used are not fantastic, but they do portray their real life counterparts closely. However, the circuits are a little plain, and the backgrounds only differ slightly. Winning particular events will unlock bonus tracks which may provide that change of scenery required for lastability.

Ford Racing comes together well as a complete package, but with the lack of an in-car view, its levels of realism and immersion are reduced considerably, sending it to the "Arcade" barrel of the racing genre. Fortunately though, it remains one of the best picks from the barrel.

Edward Fox



PCPP

FOR: Great fun, fast paced racing action in any famous Ford Vehicle. Nice looking vehicles with nice sound.

AGAINST: No in-car view.

72

WORLD MANAGER 2000

●Genre: Stats and Stuff ●Players: 1-8 (Hotseat) ●Developer: Caffeine Studios ●Publisher: Ubi Soft ●Distributor: Ubi Soft ●Price: TBA ●Rating: G ●Available: Now
●Need: P133, 32MB RAM, 200MB HDD, 4xCD, 2MB Videocard ●Want: P11, 64MB RAM, 500MB HDD ●URL: www.footballworldmanager.co.uk

IS A RED CARD GOOD ENOUGH FOR THIS DREADFUL MANAGEMENT SIM?



Thrill to the sight of the same animation playing a dozen times each match!

Every football management game that comes along will inevitably find itself compared to the Championship Manager series. Hardly surprising when you consider just how far ahead of the competition the latest, Championship Manager 3, has raced. To use a football analogy, CM3 is ten points clear at the top of the table before Christmas. It's simply brilliant, offering unparalleled depth and realism, and monstrously addictive to boot.

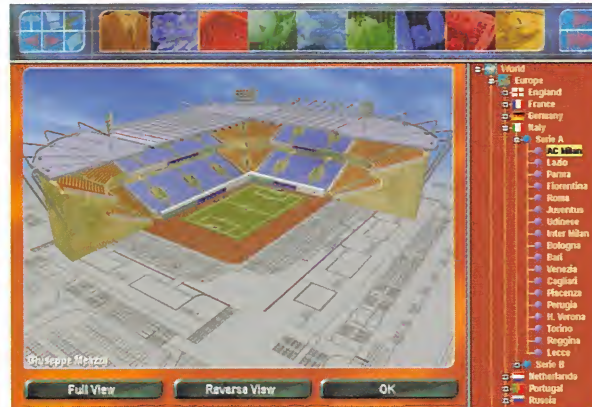
Text is best

When the pretenders to the crown make their off-season purchases to try to topple the Collyer brothers masterpiece, they all seem to make the same mistake. Football World Manager 2000 is no exception. Championship Manager's greatest strength is where you least expect it, you see. cursory observation would indicate its visual provisions aren't entirely cutting edge... Okay, it looks crap. Thus, all those seeking to develop rival titles assume the biggest improvement they can make is with the graphics. To this end, then, they adopt a variety of formations: one tactic is the use of highlights sequences depicting animated players getting booked, scoring goals, and just failing to score goals; the more ambitious approach is to use a proper 3D engine and show the whole match, or at least part of it. The developer of FWM2000 has gone for the animated highlights strategy, but ultimately it matters little as both routes miss the point entirely.

What makes CM3 so good is its visually spartan and apparently unsophisticated text-based match commentary. What it does that no other management game even comes close to achieving is inform you of exactly what's happening on the field. You can tell from each of those deceptively simple messages precisely how well your team is playing and - this bit is absolutely crucial - why. Couple this with the realtime statistical analysis for each player and you have everything you need to know in order to make necessary strategic and tactical decisions. In every other game, you're given none of this. And, yes, Football World Manager 2000 is no exception.

Blindfolded

What FWM2000 does offer is a highlights package that conveys nothing of how the match as a whole is progressing. So, for example, you can see your opponents gaining more goalscoring opportunities, but you'll have no idea why. (Is the midfield too soft? Are the defenders too slow? Are they not marking up? Who knows?) To complement this, the only player stat provided during a match is a percent figure that shows in a very general way how well they're playing. Hmm, Overmars rated 81% against Chelsea,



**“EVERY TACTICAL CHOICE IS
BASED ON GUESSWORK.”**

but only 70% versus Leeds, I wonder why? Again, the match engine is too inadequate to give you an answer. Essentially, then, almost every tactical choice you make is based on mere guesswork.

And I haven't even mentioned the handful of clumsy bugs (there's one particularly appalling one where two tactical settings get swapped between the pre-match and the in-game screens, which left me confused as to which one was accurately reporting the option I'd selected). Nor the complete farce of a scouting system (they may as well have replaced all mention of the scout in the manual with "Beat head against brick wall"). But I suspect I don't need to - you should already know the game is rubbish.

David Wildgoose

FOR: The entire world of football is indeed represented.

AGAINST: But I'm sure they'd all be deeply embarrassed if they knew. One of the poorest football sims in quite some time.

PLUS

www.footballworldmagazine.co.uk/downloads.htm

The official site rather conveniently has the latest data updates (plus a data editing tool) available for download.

FOOTBALL
WORLD MANAGER
2000

34

NOX

●Genre: Action RPG ●Players: 1-32 ●Developer: Westwood Studios ●Publisher: Electronic Arts ●Distributor: Electronic Arts ●Price: \$89.95 ●Rating: M15+ ●Available: Now
 ●Need: P200MMX, 32MB RAM, 300MB HDD, 8xCD ●Want: PII 266, 64MB RAM. ●URL: www.westwood.com/games/nox

FRENETIC ACTION GONE MEDIEVAL ON OUR COLLECTIVE ARSES



The Conjurer is a charming fellow. Sorry.



Tim cheekily prepares for a little medieval knock-and-bolt.

TIPS

- Do not accidentally walk on fire or take short cuts through lava, both can happen while you are getting used to the controls. Both are deadly in no time.
- Don't be afraid to flee.
- Mana sources regenerate so don't be afraid to use the stuff. Forcefields are well worth the high Mana cost for mages.
- Your Health and Mana regenerate slowly so if you are stuck for either you can just wait it out.

Kinetic. There's a word to describe this game. Nox takes the elements we're used to in action RPGs and hits the turbo button. Players take a Warrior, Conjurer or Wizard through a series of adventures where they grow in experience, find magic doodads and go shopping for new goodies. All pretty standard so far...

What makes this game stand out is this kinetic nature. The action is often fast and furious, being more like a shooter in pacing when the action gets hot and heavy. Sword or staff swinging is basic enough: run up and point in the general direction (if your target is

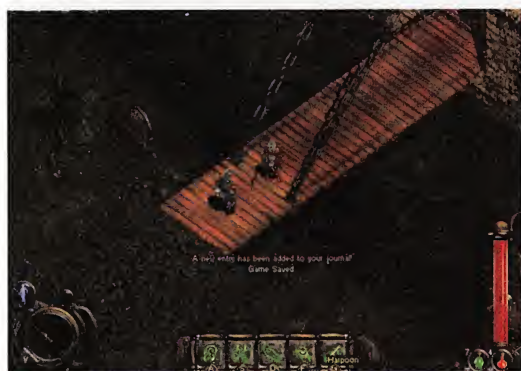
good enough to stand still, which they rarely are). But things like missile attacks, including many spells and the warrior's special abilities need quite accurate aim. A good eye and fast reflexes are a real boon in Nox. Diablo was all about choosing the right arsenal and having a tactic or two; Nox requires a little more. The pace builds slowly, giving time to adjust to the fast mouse action, even for the diehard RPG fan who usually avoids action games, and adds a level of frenetic fun and excitement.

Besides the added emphasis on motion and action in the game, the word

"kinetic" is conjured up by the interactive elements of the environment.

Redecorating Nox style

All of the chairs, bookcases, small rocks, bones and so on can be moved by the characters. Water barrels can be pushed up to fires and broken to douse the flames. Rocks can be arranged to slow down pursuit or to block doors. You can leap up onto crates or blow up barrels of gunpowder to throw shrapnel around the room. Combinations of effects are possible as well. You could push a barrel of gunpowder into a strategic position and detonate it when a



The conclusion we would draw is that this is a bridge. Geddit? Oh, save our sides, please...

monster walks by, causing it to be blown sideways into waiting lava or a trap. Maybe you leave the body on the trap so that it keeps going off so you can time running through it.

Of course, even if you don't get involved in such shenanigans, this feature does make for some satisfying fireball debris. The environment isn't completely interactive - you can't knock down walls or push barrels onto their sides to roll them, but making virtually all of the objects that aren't bolted to the floor moveable elements of the game is a pretty cool effect (which doesn't require a supercomputer to run).

Fun lovin' Hecubah

The story is pretty standard stuff involving the last Necromancer, Hecubah, trying to strike a blow for undead lovers everywhere. Trailer trash, Jack, is drawn into the land of Nox and the evil Hecubah's plans. To fight Hecubah, and save his own skin, Jack must choose the path of the Warrior, Conjurer or Wizard. This choice, and the ability to rename Jack and change his wardrobe, is the whole character creation process.

Each of the characters has a different road to the final battle with Hecubah.

This is good and bad. It means that each class can handle each encounter and the game can be paced properly all the way through, without it becoming almost impossible at some points or really easy at others. It should be noted that the pace of the game is great. It's a lively ride and the end-of-level bosses are beatable, but not without a liberal dose of anxiety.

"JUST DON'T CONFUSE ONE OF YOUR TRAPS WITH SOMEONE ELSE'S..."

Career Options

Nox is not as long as some RPGs but the different experience offered by each of the three classes balances this nicely. The diversity of gameplay offered allows players to get used to the game with the class which most suits your skills and type of play.

The appeal of the warrior is obvious. These guys have the most strength and can take the most damage meaning they can handle problems head on. Their special abilities including the War Shout, which stuns enemies, and the Berserker Charge spice up the class to equal the fun and playability of the magic wielders. These guys are tailor

made for fans of action with good reflexes and mouse control.

The Conjurer has some combat skills and is the only class allowed to use bows and crossbows, making them deadly at range. They also pack quite a magical punch and specialise in charming and summoning monsters. These critters form a mean guard and the AI combined with simple commands like "hunt," "guard," and "escort" mean that these bewitched creatures are always worth having around. At high level the Conjurer can also summon a "Bomber". This beast is like a seeking missile containing three spells which it delivers if it strikes its target. This can be devastating. Imagine

SCHOOLING OTHERS IN HARD NOX

Nox is a fairly fast game in single player; as a multiplayer experience it is thrown into overdrive. Characters start at maximum levels and with all of their skills. Players run around picking up weapons and armour much like in a shooter and set about with the mayhem. Strangely, the whole feel of the game is like a top-down firstperson action game, where your character has to keep on the move and shoot with great reflexes and accuracy.

There are several different games which can be played and players can host up to 4 players on the net or up to 32 on Westwood Online or on a LAN. Games include straight out

Deathmatches as Elimination (last Jack standing) and Flagball, which is a cross between capture the flag and football. These games take on an almost Team Fortress feel with each of the different classes having different skills and functions in the each team.

The only problem is lag, which can make hand-to-hand action a challenge. Traps, seeking spells and devices, like the Warrior's chackrum, own net games. Of course, a good connection or a LAN set-up will take care of that.

This might not be Quake 3 Arena or Everquest, but it is a hoot and a great addition to the Nox experience.



Like most RPGs, spells are more fun than swords.



being hit by a Slow, then a Stun spell followed by a Toxic Cloud. You could just use three offensive spells and blow the crap out of the unfortunate victim.

Conjurers are good for players who do not have the greatest confidence in their mouse skills, but like funky magic. The bow is deadly for those with good aim, but charmed creatures and seeking spells can make up for the more cerebral players.

Finally, there is the path of the Wizard. These guys get the widest range of spells and can use the most powerful wands and staves. They also have the ability to set traps and layer up to three other spells into them, much like the Conjurer's Bomber. The Wizard who makes the trap may also pick it up and move it around once he has created it. Just don't confuse one of your traps with someone else's when you try pick it up...

Strangely, even with the trap ability and pyrotechnic spells, the Wizard seems to be the most unoriginal of the classes and his need to back off and prepare spells probably makes this character the least fun to play. On the other hand, if you are that way inclined, the Wizard

does pack plenty of possibilities, especially in the kinetic environment.

Non-accelerated Magic

The pyrotechnics, and graphics in general, are all pretty good. Nox does not use hardware acceleration, but this does not detract from the glowing spell effects or the ambience of the environments. It uses Westwood's "TrueSight" system, meaning that rays are drawn out from the character and only areas which are unobstructed can be seen, with the rest of the screen being black. This might not be completely new nor revolutionary, but it looks great when you slowly peer into a room and see the shadows flow away. The effect makes you wonder what is hiding behind the pillar or what is in the corner of the room that you are looking into through a door opened a crack.

The sound is mixed, with some of the commoners breaking out what sounds

like an American attempt at an Aussie accent. I'm sure it's not deliberate, but it's pretty funny to hear in a fantasy setting. Likewise, the effects range from tinny to booming (in a good way). These variations might bring a wry smile to your lips, but they aren't odd enough to damage the fun of the game.

Gnats

Nox is a great ride, from the simple story to the gnashing traps and swarming critters. It takes RPG sensibilities and adds an action twist where run and gun tactics are the order of the day. Of course, most of the time you can send that order right back to the chef by slowing things down, inching forward and liberally applying the battle cry of "Run away!"

Nox is a lot of fun with enough thrills and spills as well as RPG-ed-ness to put it into a class of its own.

Timothy C. Best

PCPP

FOR: Interface is clean and easy to use once you learn the hot keys. Fun combination of RPG and frenetic action spiced with quirky humour.

AGAINST: Like a rollercoaster, it's a great ride but it's on rails (can you say linear?).

PLUS

www.eliki.com/ancient/beliefs/medvmagic
Who were the real deal necromancers? Check this site out - you might learn something (hopefully not too much).

MEDIEVAL MAGICS

83

YOU ARE

BUILDER

Build castles, temples, knight schools,
trading posts, lodges and
expand your kingdom.

YOU ARE

DESTROYER

Annihilate Evil's spawning
grounds in 19 immersive fantasy quests.

YOU ARE

WAR

Create an army to quell your
upstart neighbours and free the
land of rebels and monsters.

YOU ARE

PEACE

Bring serenity and prosperity
to your long-suffering citizens.

YOU ARE

MIGHT

Harness all the power of your kingdom
to repel invasions and
protect your regal position.

YOU ARE

THE LAW

Raise taxes. Declare war. Make strategic alliances.
Direct your heroes to explore,
attack or defend.



MAJESTY

YOU ARE

KING

YOU RULE



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www.majestyquest.com

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MICROPROSE

PC CD-ROM



INVICTUS: THE SHADOW OF OLYMPUS

●Genre: Tactical RPG ●Players: 1 - 4 ●Developer: Quicksilver Software ●Publisher: Interplay ●Distributor: Interplay ●Price: \$TBA ●Available: NOW
●Need: P266, 64MB RAM, 300MB HDD ●Want: PII 350, 128MB RAM ●URL: www.interplay.com/invictus/index.html

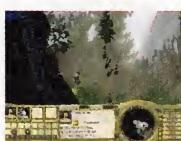
BRUSH UP YOUR SPARTACUS IMPERSONATIONS - HAMMY GREEK MYTHOLOGY AHEAD...

TIPS

- Your troops can form multiple formations to make best use of your tactical situation. Learn to make best use of the line, wedge and box arrangements.
- Always keep your hand close to the map rotating controls, as they are a handy solution to the problem of tall, opaque objects.
- Start with the beefier heroes on your first few goes. There'll be plenty of time to muck around with flying pansies later on.
- Remember to save and/or get health off that guy who sells the apples. It's cheaper to heal one of your men than to replace him.
- Don't forget to click on all the characters multiple times to see what they have to say!



This screenshot of Invictus' main menu was so pretty, we just had to include it.



The ancient world, either straight or mixed with elements of fantasy or creative licence, has become a rich compost bed for the gestation of cheesy computer games. Whether seminal products like Warcraft or specialised, reflective strategy games like Caesar, mythology and doric columns can lend a certain air of authority and timelessness to a game (as opposed to filling it with say,

a SWAT team, or Muppets). But while this tack can be sublime when it succeeds ("stop poking me!"), failure means yet another palette of laughable dross.

Invictus sees the potential for epic disaster, and rather than trying to avoid this destiny it embraces it instead. The mythology of ancient Greece comes alive, as it only can when performed by a phalanx of American voice actors. Some, like Hercules, manage to infuse their characters with the jovial booming expected of demigods, while others couldn't disguise their accents if they tried. But all have dialogue that could only be described as "excellent."

God Squad

To expand, when you're selecting the epic heroes for your war party, and sifting through their Boris Bajello-like portraits, each candidate will give some subtle and poignant quip as to why you should choose them. For instance, Achilles declares that he'll fight "until the enemy is crushed under my heel, or

I am dead. Er, whichever comes first." After picking your name-brand Greek heroes from an exhaustive lineup, you get to add some generic grunts to your posse. These too have slogans based on their profession: the spearman, when highlighted, will say "Take me. I get the point across."

From here, your troops become but playthings of the gods, like the pieces on that chess set Zeus is always messing with. You are an instrument in an epic struggle between Poseidon and Athena as to who will control the Earth, gods or men. You are of course fighting for the good guys and your elite team of humans, demi-humans and demi-gods will have to slaughter many an identical foe before your quest is finished.

No choice but to kill

The action, such as it is, is viewed from overhead. While there are some elaborate graphical techniques in place to offer the illusion of a rolling, dynamic terrain, the map is essentially a grid, and subject to all the Warcraft-





Ye Olde Lonely Planet Guide



"I say, this looks like a smashing picnic spot!"

esque movement limitations we've come to know and despise. Lumbering over the polygonal terrain is your chosen party, a selection of demigods and assorted other hangers-on. You control and guide them by the standard box dragging and enemy clicking, but the graphics don't go out of their way to create a seamless emotional bond between you and your on-screen avatars.

"...AN INSTRUMENT OF EPIC STRUGGLE BETWEEN POSEIDON AND ATHENA..."

Stilted, jerky, crap, however you describe it, your little fantasy men and women are cursed with ungainly animations. It's painful to watch as they twitch and skate on the landscape, moonwalking their way into tactical obsolescence.

There is great potential in the play environment chosen, however, for with simplicity comes robustness and flexibility. The interface at first resembles a better lit, medieval update of *Syndicate Wars*, but there has been greater effort put into scripting the responses of the characters you encounter. In an overland cross

between *Gauntlet* and *Diablo*, squads of characters may interact in a limited fashion with peasants, enemies and the environment, exchanging dialogue as well as blows. This facilitates the adventurer's economy we've come to expect, where you stagger blindly off into bandit-infested woods, and return to your home village where you can exchange several bars of gold for an apple.

The multiplayer options mercifully support spawning, and encompass the usual range of fighting rules: capture the flag, deathmatch, and so forth. Units can be bought and sold based on their combat strength, making handicapping possible.

Caveat Emptor

There are the occasional touches

implemented throughout, which, under a positive light, could be described as "nice." Such as the creepy way your cursor slinks away after selecting your men, or how if you let the pointer rest on a river, an authoritative voice will inform you that "it's a river."

There has been sufficient depth placed in the game options that you can start with widely different teams, focussing on cavalry, or archers, or centaurs if you so choose. You don't need to choose good heroes either, you can lead your team with Icarus if you feel like punishing yourself.

If the assumption is made that Interplay set out to package a comical, sub-par, unadventurous adventure romp that's not quite lame enough to be camp and not quite outdated enough to be retro, then they've succeeded beyond their wildest dreams. But if they wanted to create a new product that can seriously compete with half the stuff in the bargain bins, then they've failed.

James Cottee

PCPP

FOR: Cheesy interpretation of Greek mythos, *Diablo*-esque combat, the occasional piece of nice artwork.

AGAINST: Poor AI, choppy graphics, done-to-death genre,

PLUS
Spartacus
For more lite Greek mythology, you must see this 50's epic blockbuster starring Kirk Douglas.



51

NASCAR REVOLUTION

●Genre: Motorsport Sim ●Players: 1-12 ●Developer: EA Sports ●Publisher: EA Sports ●Distributor: Electronic Arts ●Price: \$69.95 ●Rating: G ●Available: Now
 ●Need: P200, 32MB RAM, 370 HDD, 8xCD, 16bit Videocard ●Want: PIII350, 64MB RAM, 370 HDD, 8xCD, 3D Videocard (D3D, Glide), 3D Soundcard (EAX) ●URL: www.nascarrevolution.com

SO IT'S A REVOLUTION, EH? WELL, WE SUPPOSE THEY DO GO ROUND AND ROUND AND ROUND AND... YOU GET THE IDEA.



Trying to win a race on two wheels is the only way to make this game interesting.

EA Sports, typically aligned with the "team & ball" flavoured sports titles, isn't particularly renowned for its contributions to the simulated motorsports genre. This, however unfortunate, hasn't prevented the release of NASCAR Revolution, a stock car racing simulator based on the 1998 Winston Cup.

Front-end Glitz

In tradition with all EA Sports titles, the front-end is surrounded by all the glitz and glam of the US commercial sports scene, and in the case of NASCAR Revolution, is probably the most redeeming feature of the entire game. All the expected options are present: single race, testing, championship and multiplayer. However, after a short fifteen-minute race, it quickly becomes apparent that the most appealing of all these options

circuit is traversed, AI cars tend to ignore the existence of any human driven vehicle and barge you off the road at any opportunity they get. Mind you, this is nothing compared to what they do to each other! There is no true sensation of speed in NASCAR Revolution. Coupled with the awful in-car view (are those arms supposed to belong to the driver or ET?), the portable mini-vac cleaner that appears to have been sampled to resemble the car engine noise says only one thing to me: "I've just bought a new drink coaster!"

Shellshock suspension

Two US NASCAR commentators were employed to provide that well-known EA Sports TV feel presentation. However, their comments are out of place and terribly implemented. For example, on the first lap you'll likely hear, "He's been running great all day!"



can easily lead to making the mistake that NASCAR Revolution has something to offer. Sadly, and in line with the rest of the game, the graphics are awry. Cars resemble a cross between a kangaroo on speed and a car with no edges, polished with Super Wax 'n' Shine 2000, as the developers appear to have gone a little overboard with the bouncy suspension and the exuberant gloss render. The car is very customisable, but even this is useless as the car handles the same regardless of the changes made.

I gave NASCAR Revolution a good workout whilst struggling to find some decent points worth mentioning, but alas I could find only one. The second CD! On it are about a hundred video clips covering many aspects of NASCAR racing, including personal advice and interviews with big name mechanics. It just seems such a shame to waste it all on a well below average arcade racer.

Edward Fox

"...BARGE YOU OFF THE ROAD AT ANY OPPORTUNITY THEY GET."

is the exit button located at the bottom.

Any reference to "serious simulation" in the manual should be blotted out with liquid paper immediately! NASCAR Revolution is a game for the casual racer who has no concept of quality. The AI may prove to be a challenge at first, but after a good thirty minutes in the driver's seat (if you last this long), it quickly becomes apparent how dismal its level of simulated intelligence actually is. As the

Additionally pathetic is the team spotter who must suffer from 'Nam flashbacks as he constantly warns of dangers that aren't there. The visuals are deceptive to say the least, and browsing the back of the box whilst installing the game

PCPP

FOR: Second CD contains some interesting NASCAR video clips. Oh, and the exit button.

AGAINST: Everything else!

PLUS

www.nascar-3.com
 Check out a REAL NASCAR sim!

35

How
do you put
the magic
back in her
life?

Show
her your
wand!

Simon the sorcerer 3D

Simon is back...

Real-time 3D adventure with over 60
Characters to interact with.

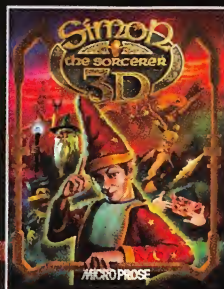
Have fun with the ribald jokes, sly
humour and 'off the cuff' quips.

Complex, humorous and highly
entertaining story line.

3D Sub-games — Gnome Firing
Competition, Tight Rope Walking,
Darts, Climbing, Crazy Golf and More.

Enjoy discovering the surroundings
with mentally challenging puzzles.

Visit highly involving and
immersive locations.



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MICRO PROSE

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RISING SUN

●Genre: Turn-Based Strategic Wargame ●Players: 1-16 ●Developer: Talonsoft ●Publisher: Talonsoft ●Distributor: Jack of All Games ●Price: \$89-95 ●Rating: G8+
●Available: Now ●Need: P200, 32MB RAM, 156MB HDD ●Want: P266, 64 MB RAM ●URL: www.talonsoft.com

IF YOU THINK YOU KNOW WEST FRONT AND EAST FRONT BACK-TO-FRONT, THEN THIS HEX-HEAVY WARGAME AWAITS.



Rising Sun, the third in Talonsoft's Campaign series, fine tunes an excellent game engine to produce the first comprehensive coverage of the Pacific land war during WWII. In addition to some general interface improvements over its predecessors, West Front and East Front, Rising Sun captures the unique tactical and environmental aspects of an often-overlooked theatre of war. As a bonus, Australians are particularly well catered for in this game. Australia made a significant contribution to the war against Japan, and players now have the opportunity to recreate the key actions in which we were involved, including Malaya, the Kokoda Trail and the airborne assault against Nadzab.

Get some gills

Veterans of the series will be very comfortable with Rising Sun's interface, although it has been tailored to reflect the nature of jungle and island warfare. The treatment of

"...CORAL REEFS, DENSE JUNGLE, AND STRONGLY DEFENSIBLE CAVE SYSTEMS."

amphibious operations is outstanding, as players come to grips with the different characteristics of various amphibious vehicles, limited opportunities for surprise, and the vulnerability of troops during final approach and disembarkation. Night fighting - a common practice in the Pacific Theatre - also offers unique challenges, as does a wide variety of difficult terrain, including coral reefs, dense jungle, and strongly defensible cave systems. Some forty scenarios are included, as well as dynamic and linked campaigns, a battle generator and an excellent scenario editor.

Situational awareness is aided by Talonsoft's usual mix of 2D and 3D zoom views, and the graphical quality provides a high degree of detail at all levels. All actions are controlled by the



No need to do that. This is a game to keep on your hard drive for some time.

mouse, supported by a logical mix of tool bars, information screens and hot keys. I was particularly impressed by the use of unit 'thermometer' bars to graphically display key data, such as morale and strength factors. This permits players to get a feel for their

Old hands will be equally satisfied, as Talonsoft has continued with its tradition of providing a wealth of equipment, weapons and organisational data, coupled with the ability to modify existing scenarios or create new ones from the ground up. Maps can be edited, environmental conditions specified, and orders of battle modified. The manual is undoubtedly Talonsoft's best effort so far, finally striking the right balance between detail and example. The walk-through tutorial covers just about every aspect of the game, as well as providing tips to get novices through their first beach assault.

Rising Sun caps off the Campaign series very nicely. The interface is essentially the same, but Talonsoft has incorporated enough improvements over the earlier releases to justify the cost. Justice has certainly been done to a fascinating theatre of war that hasn't been well represented in the past.

Major Des McNicholas

A decent manual

Rising Sun is certainly the most accessible of the series, and players new to turn-based strategy will find it a first class introduction to the genre.

PCPP

FOR: Quick to learn, an excellent tutorial, and a proven interface. The best representation of the Pacific war available. Lots of ANZACs!

AGAINST: AI could be more aggressive, particularly as the Allies. Games are long and slow, although dedicated wargamers will not be put off by that.

PLUS

You can't beat the Images of War series by Marshall Cavendish for a great introduction to the major campaigns of WWII. Information from the Pacific Theatre includes historical articles, newspapers, and detailed maps. Re-released on a regular basis, this is a good one to look for.



82



PHOTOGRAPH BY [illegible]

PRO-RIDE II. GOOD CLEAN FUN.

STAY



TRUE

ULTIMA ONLINE: DISCOVERY EDITION

●Genre: MMORPG ●Players: 1-5000 (per server) ●Developer: Origin ●Publisher: EA ●Distributor: EA ●Price: \$49.95 ●Rating: M
●Available: Now ●Need: P200, 32MB RAM, Win 9.x, 383MB HDD, Internet connection. ●Want: PII, 128MB RAM, 650MB HDD, Ethernet connection/cable modem ●URL: www.uo.com

WELCOME TO BRITANNIA... CAN WE SEE SOME I.D. PLEASE?



Lord British's throne room - not surprisingly - completely empty. This is perhaps the most popular location for in-game, player organised protests.

TIPS

- * When creating a character, select combat skills. You'll need to defend yourself from day 1 in Britannia - trying to spear a troll with a fishing rod has proven to be quite ineffective. You can learn the other skills later.
- * Invest in some magic skills once you've developed your basic combat abilities. This way, you've access to the recall spells - instant access to almost anywhere in Britannia.
- * Never venture out in the wilderness alone unless you can defend yourself against killers.
- * Whilst in combat, run like buggery once your health meter hits fifty percent. Any lower than that and your stamina takes a hit, making escape from your attacker nigh on impossible.
- * Make friends. It's much more fun and they'll often help you out. It's a multiplayer game, after all.

Welcome to the first review of Ultima Online. Yes, we're very well aware that it's been a full two years since it was released in the US (and almost eighteen months since its local debut), and that this review might be considered a little bit late. And although UO has been the star of a handful of PCPP features over the years and enjoyed a lot of attention in NGN, the time is right for the PCPP review. To end twenty-four months of rumour and hearsay, the reason for the delay is simple. Only recently were Australian Britanniens bestowed with a local UO game server, or as it's otherwise known as - a UO shard.

Before this much-overdue event, local players were forced to brave the foul and treacherous lag monsters of the internet. Combined with painful ping times and the more frustrating server stutters and crashes, playing from these shores was quite simply not possible unless one sported a speedy (and usually expensive) internet service or played during the less congested ISP periods, most likely in the wee hours of the morning.

With the Oceania server (based in Sydney.au), local players can now login

to UO and face its many perils - with lag, however, now finally extinct. So without further ado...

Forging ahead

UO is one of those new fangled persistent massively multiplayer online roleplaying games. Which basically means, lots and lots of people are able to play together simultaneously, and the world itself continues to exist and develop whether or not you are logged on to it. UO rallied strong support from the existing Ultima fanbase with the promise of a huge game of Prisons and Wyverns in a Britannian setting during its development, and has been raking in the subscribers ever since.

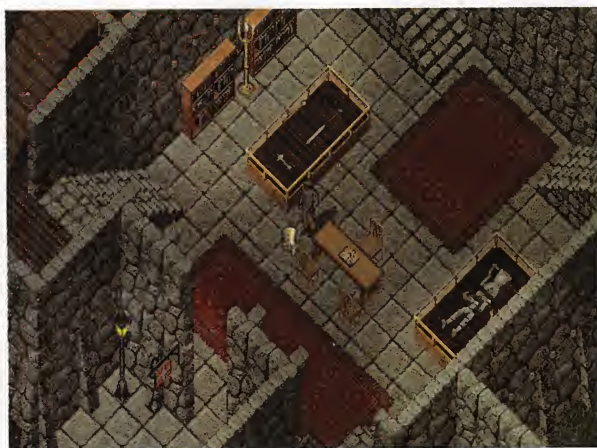
To appreciate how UO works, consider the following questions. How do you create a sense of purpose and development in a game featuring no one protagonist, in a setting where there is no ending? How do you satisfy a gamer who is but another face in a crowded sea of would-be Avatars?

Without a doubt, UO is an experiment on Origin's behalf - a bold step in the direction of evolving the

humble RPG. Origin's answer to these perplexing questions was to create a highly detailed world (true the series' trademark) to serve as the stage for one giant roleplaying game (in the traditional, table-top kinda way). They gave players a seemingly infinite number of options to carve out their own name into the history books and pursue fame and glory. Be you a fisherman or a seamstress, a lumberjack or a grandmaster mage, the idea was that combat, stat development and other RPG staples would be secondary to the great big roleplay being acted out by each and every character. The idea was simple, divert players' attention from fame and glory by engaging them with all manner of (at times, mundane) day to day tasks.

Well met!

Origin has succeeded in bringing an incredibly detailed version of Britannia to our computers. Visually, the game contains perhaps the largest count of single items ever seen in a game. Combined with a stunning seamless game map - players can quite easily





Moongates - the cheapest way to travel.

traverse from one corner of the map to another (however not in a real hurry, it should be mentioned) - UO's Britannia size can seem refreshingly daunting. The only grounds for complaint here is the awkward perspective employed, giving UO a harsh angular edge that just doesn't sit right.

In terms of gameplay, Origin have also come up with the goods. Players could scour the woods for game with bow and arrow at the ready - and should the you run out of arrows, easy! Simply hack off a branch from a nearby tree, shave it down to arrow size, pinch some feathers from a nearby wandering magpie and presto - you've just created another arrow. With such detail applied to almost every other aspect of the gameworld, there was enough variety to satisfy the various types of roleplayers out there. Complete with scores of monsters, animals and NPCs, UO seems the ultimate RPG experience in which to get lost in. Isn't it funny how some things sound so good on paper?

Tedious

And then you play the thing. Like with any experiment, the results you end up with aren't necessarily the ones you had anticipated. As is the case with UO. Firstly, to create a character hardy enough to withstand the rigours of the wild (players can't exactly remain within the safe havens of the city for ever now, can they?), players have to invest a HUGE amount of time and work into the game. Work, because no other word can better describe it. To raise your stats and skill proficiency (low skill scores often means failure to produce something or puts you at a disadvantage in combat), you have to



Ultima Online: where the only thing sharper than the sword is the player's wit.

practice using them. Designed to be raised slowly over the course of your adventures, the harsh reality of UO requires that you raise them quickly to avoid frustrating death (which seems to lurk around every corner). Click - text message - fail. Click - fail. Click - succeed! Click - fail again. Click - oh how mundane!

Once your character has some experience, the focus of gameplay shifts towards character interaction. To this end, most players join guilds (replete with cutthroat politics and power plays), or take a more Good Samaritan route and help other players for satisfying gameplay - after all, this is a massively multiplayer game. As bonding with other players can be difficult and requires even more of a time investment, many get their kicks by killing other players - more often than not vulnerable newer players - for no other reason than to inconvenience their victims. It's an easy way to vent the frustration that UO seems to constantly generate. And since building your character can be so



Flawed

Origin's constantly working on fixing UO's flaws and making it a more enjoyable experience, with a patch release every couple of weeks. Therefore, UO is constantly evolving - but not at a rate to satisfy this old-time Ultima fan. The game is deep, engaging, at times boring, and

“... PLAYERS HAVE TO INVEST A HUGE AMOUNT OF TIME AND WORK ...”

mundane (especially at early stages), it's really quite easy to be put off the game after a couple of visits to the death screen. And when you consider that it is likely your death was at the hands of a young, immature player (only students and the unemployed can really afford much time to play the game), there's added insult to injury. The anonymous virtual world can be a tough one.

especially frustrating. To get the most out of it, you'll need to invest a lot of time - UO simply doesn't accommodate the casual once-a-week players.

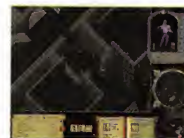
For an experience closer to what was originally envisioned by the makers of the Ultima series - and one with less player killer woes - I recommend that you wait for Ultima Online 2.

March Stepnik

PCPP

FOR: Plenty of scope and detail. Roleplaying aspects can be quite engaging.

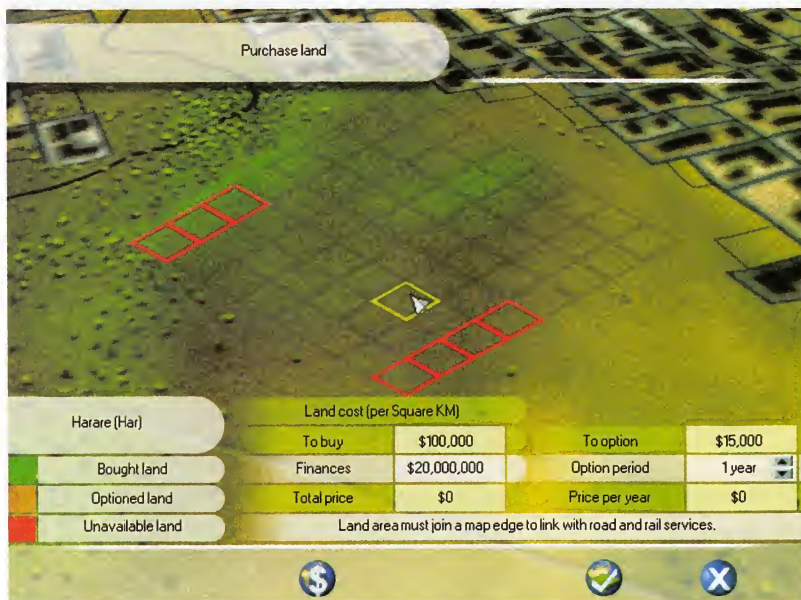
AGAINST: The immature basically run the game. Highly frustrating.



AIRPORT INC.

●Genre: Airport Sim ●Players: 1 ●Developer: Krisalis ●Publisher: Take Two Interactive ●Distributor: Jack of All Games ●Price: \$79.95 ●Rating: G
●Available: Now ●Need: P200, 16MB RAM, 300MB HDD ●Want: PII 350, 28MB RAM, 300MB HDD, 3D Video Card (D3D) ●URL: www.krisalis.co.uk

IN A SURPRISING TWIST, AIRPORT FAILED TO LIVE UP TO OUR EXPECTATIONS.



One of the first game screens you come across. Sadly, it doesn't get much better than this.

If you had any shred of doubt in your mind that airports weren't centres of cunning exploits, nail-biting action and tear-jerking drama, then please turn your attention to the charming television show "Airport" currently screening on Channel Nine. It's take on the day to day running of Heathrow airport in London, UK is - quite frankly - riveting television. From (ho ho ho!) tales of hundreds of budgies proving too much to handle to the heart-warming tale of the family That Chose to Sleep On Them Benches Rather Than Pay Through The Nose And Stay In The Hotel till the next connecting flight, Airport is the most "real" television show of the moment. It should also cast any doubt aside as to the potential of an airport setting in a computer game.

Krisalis Software is the first off the mark in bringing us a Bullfrog-style sim based upon creating and managing

Cute

Krisalis has opted for a somewhat cutesy presentation with Airport Inc., with a strong cartoony feel - both in the proportion of the items and the use of colour. However there's nary a Li'l Helper With A Delightful Accent to be seen. Instead, you are given basic text instructions and advice on the odd occasion to help you on your way: like pertinent reminders that for an airport to succeed, you're going to have to purchase a runway. I shan't even bother going into the ever-so-useless online help menu in any great detail - click on a game hotspot and select a generic "How do I do this...?" question from a static menu.

As for the airport management, AI requires that you start from scratch. You must first choose your lot of land (it's more expensive the closer to the city you are, but you're likely to attract more customers), build your terminal (complete with check-in counters,



- hmm.. whether the long-term parking or the short-term should I choose?) and, naturally, make sure you've got the airstrips and the appropriate support structures. Finally, once you've got it all up and running, you've got to start managing the books. Success is gauged by the moolah coming in, as well as the number of happy customers wandering your halls and the number of airline contracts you command.

Messy

It is quite obvious that Krisalis has modelled Airport Inc. on games like Theme Hospital and Maxis' Sim City. Rather than taking the well-produced elements of these games and moulding them to an airport setting, it appears that Krisalis stopped once they got the basic mechanics of the game functioning. Airport Inc features an ugly and confusing interface, with a noticeable lack of game options for the player to tinker around with. It also lacks any agreeable style or personality. Combine this with a rather confusing learning curve and lack of adequate support literature, and you've got one messy airport simulator.

All this makes for a great endurance test in uncovering the actual gameplay - which is, unfortunately, rather lacking. With only a handful of "disaster" scenarios in the game, this sim is far more a book balancing affair than anything else. Airport Inc. is a terrific idea executed poorly. My advice: stick with the TV show.

March Stepnik

"...ONLY A HANDFUL OF DISASTERS IN THE GAME..."

the finest airport the world has ever seen. While the potential is all there for an engaging sim game (notwithstanding the ability to book a take off and landing on the same runway at the same time), Airport Inc. - rather unfortunately too, it must be said - simply fails to capture the tension and drama of running a busy aerospace hub.

passenger lounges, bathrooms, security halls, retail areas and gate areas), connect your terminal to the roadway (and ensure you've got plenty of parking



PCPP

FOR: The basics are fully featured. The structure looks like an airport, too.

AGAINST: Attempts to do too much, leaving little attention to the finer, more important details.

42

KA-52 ALLIGATOR

●Genre: Chopper Sim ●Players: 1-8 ●Developer: Simis ●Publisher: GT Interactive ●Distributor: GT Interactive ●Price: \$89.95 ●Rating: M15+ ●Available: Now
 ●Need: P166, 32MB RAM, 280 HDD, 4xCD ●Want: P200, 64MB RAM, 280 HDD, 3D Videocard (D3D), 16xCD ●URL: www.gtgames.com

THE OFFICIAL LINE IS "FROM RUSSIA WITH STEALTH" AND, TO BE HONEST, WE COULDN'T COME UP WITH ANYTHING BETTER.



Good work, Ed. Vodka or cigar?

Dodgy physics

KA-52 visuals are stunning in some areas, but left a little sour in others. Flying at night is a wonderful experience: getting in low whilst strafing an enemy armour column precipitates a rain of hot lead from the AA gun on the tanks. This is represented spectacularly by the flashing blast of each round fired, lighting up the top of the tank. Unfortunately, when retaliatory action is undertaken, the resulting explosion of your missile finding its mark is poorly depicted.

Probably the most disappointing feature of the entire game is the flight physics. The aircraft, even when set to the most realistic flight setting possible, reacts like a cross between the controls of an F-16 with those of an AH-64. Response is very primitive, and the feel of an aircraft reacting to gravity is just not present. Control is not impossible to master, but requires some patience as there is little familiarity to previous chopper sims.

KA-52 isn't exactly the Schwarzenegger of chopper sims (*Oh dear - Ed*), but is a neat package, perfect for the casual enthusiast looking for some fast paced helo action.

Edward Fox

Choppers are very cool. They may not have the ability to fly at blistering speeds like their jet-powered counterparts, but their manoeuvrability and stealth is an essential ingredient in the modern day battlefield. Combat helos such as the Apache and the Comanche are well known amongst the ranks of simulated combat titles, but new to the scene for y2k is the KA-52 Alligator. Simply put, it is the most modern attack chopper the Russians have ever had in their arsenal. Sister title of GT Interactive's Team Apache from last year, KA-52 Team Alligator offers the job of helicopter pilot in the Russian

extremely helpful when presented with an intense combat situation, as the job of flying and commanding your squad can become quite hectic.

There are two campaign environments available, Byelorussia and Tajikistan, each consisting of a mixture of over sixty missions in total. If a fellow pilot happens to get shot down during the course of any mission, a SAR (search and rescue) assignment is immediately set in order to bring him/her home.

As commander of the squad it is also your duty to recruit from the best men and women the Russian army has to

"...PRECIPITATES A RAIN OF HOT LEAD FROM THE AA GUN..."

army. The twin prop KA-52 is the most highly guarded secret in the Russian army today, so research information was sourced via manufacturers and from the internet. Though because of this it's difficult to tell just how close GT have come to the real thing.

Vodka and cigars

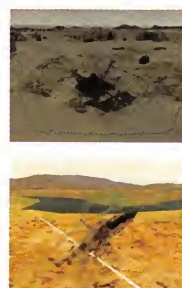
With a medium level of complexity, KA-52 offers little immersion for the hardcore, but satisfaction for the casual gamer. Flight avionics are simplistic when compared to the depth of Jane's sims. And with the two-man crew of the Alligator (you're in the pilot seat while the AI is the gunner), most of the flight time can be spent flying the chopper as your number two will take care of most of the targeting duties. This can be

offer. Each AI pilot is defined by five statistics from flight ability to morale - the latter being critical to your squad's combat effectiveness. Squad morale is maintained by commending your officers when they perform well and disciplining them should they err. In addition - and this is the strangest feature ever seen in ANY flight sim - as an added bonus for your lucky comrades, commanding officers also have the ability to give them "gifts" in the form of anything from a bottle of vodka or case of cigars to permission for a visit to a brothel!

PCPP

FOR: Awesome model representation. Original concept. Indepth training missions.

AGAINST: Physics suck. Graphical inadequacies (explosions, etc). Strange pilot management system.



ARMY MEN: IN SPACE

●Genre: Toy Soldier RTS ●Players: 1-4 ●Developer: 3DO ●Publisher: 3DO ●Distributor: Jack of all Games ●Price: \$49.95 ●Rating: G8+
●Available: Now ●Need: P90, 16MB RAM, 100MB HDD ●Want: P133, 32MB RAM, 275MB HDD ●URL: www.armymen.com

GOOD, CLEAN, PLASTIC FUN.



I took one last look at the target and motioned my squad forward. Sandbox, bucket and spade, half-eaten sandwich - just as the intelligence bods at HQ had predicted. We were ready. Any alien that got in the way would feel the cold steel of our plastic bayonets! Bazooka Man edged forward, scouting a path. Movement to the right... fly swatter! I called out a warning. Too late! Splat! Splat! Splat! I gathered up the pieces and cradled his head in my arms. This was a major repair job - and we were out of glue!

“...WORK YOUR WAY PAST GARDEN TOOLS AND PICNIC BASKETS...”

In a remarkably innovative change of pace, the original Army Men turned away from the ever growing obsession with realism and recreated plastic battles on the PC. Army Men: In Space is the third in the series, offering more of the same with the interesting twist of an Alien invasion. The dreaded Tan Army has teamed up with some bugged extra-terrestrials, and it's up to Green Sarge's squad and Tina Tomorrow's Space Troopers to save the world. Single missions or a complete campaign are on offer, as well as a battle creator and configurable multiplayer.

Toy soldiers

In essence, this is a pretty good squad based RTS set in a toy world. As in the earlier releases, Sarge is the central character. He commands the



Rotten pear at 10 o'clock! Mosquitoes incoming!! Aargh, I'm being eaten!!! Etc...

squad, and has the ability to find and use the various power-ups that litter the battlefield, including weapons, equipment and air support. Squad members specialise in rifles, mortars, grenades or flamethrowers (great melting effect!), all of which can be

has improved aspects such as unit selection and grouping, map control and inventory management. All functions are controlled by the mouse, supported by a simple range of shortcut keys. As it should be in an RTS, the manual can be put to one side halfway through the first mission, allowing you to concentrate on thinking your way through each scenario.

I threatened to resign my commission when March gave me this one, on the grounds that it's not a 'proper' wargame, but he ordered me to carry on. And I have to admit that this game is a lot of fun. On the surface it's one for the younger player, but there's enough depth to keep RTS old-timers interested as well. Army Men: In Space rips along at a fair old pace, and it's not that often that you get to decide the future of the world in a bathroom! Keep this on the PC for those times when you've had enough of Commandos or Tiberian Sun.

Major Des McNicholas



PLUS
www.miniatures.de/
The Military Miniatures Magazine site should be your first port of call if you're interested in miniature wargaming. Painting, basing, rules - it's all explained, supported by simple instructions, photos and diagrams.

PCPP

FOR: Neat spin on a good idea. Simple interface, challenging missions, and a lot of fun. Low system requirements. Great value.

AGAINST: Basic graphics and not the brightest AI you're likely to come across. Some of the acting is a little plastic!

66

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SCORE LIST

THE PAST YEAR IN GAMING. THIS MONTH WE HIGHLIGHT OUR PICK OF THE BEST

GAME NAME SCORE ISSUE#

FIFA 2000

88% IN PCPP#45

Developer: EA Sports

Publisher: EA

Distributor: EA

What we said then: "The real jewel in the crown is in the form of ultra-realistic player animation captured with the help of Manchester United's Andy Cole. FIFA 2000 is another EA Sports triumph."



12 O'Clock High	68	#46
Abomination	81	#44
● Age of Empires 2	94	#42
Age of Wonders	84	#46
Akuma: Demonspawn	50	#47
● Aliens vs. Predator	96	#37
● Alpha Centauri	96	#36
Alpha Centauri: Alien X-fire	83	#45
Amerzone	68	#42

ANNO 1602	71	#40
Army Men 2	79	#38
Asghan	43	#37
Australian Cricket Captain	86	#36
BG: Sword Coast	76	#41
Battle of Britain	62	#38
Beavis and Butt-head	68	#36
Blackstone Chronicles	75	#37
Boss Rally	5	#39
Braveheart	86	#42
Breakneck	86	#39
● C&C Tiberian Sun	94	#41
Castrol Superbikes 2000	85	#42
Championship Manager 3	85	#38
● Civ 2: Multiplayer + classic	90	#28
● Civilization: Call To Power	96	#36
Civ: Test of Time	81	#41
Clans	48	#42
Codename: Eagle	64	#46
Commandos: Call of Duty	83	#38
Constructor: Street Wars	74	#39
Corsairs	65	#40
● Cricket World Cup '99	93	#38
Cutthroats	67	#43
Dark Side of the Moon	47	#36
Dark Vengeance	30	#36
Darkstone	68	#42
Dawn of Aces	72	#36
Delta Force 2	78	#46
● Descent 3	95	#38
Descent 3: Mercenaries	65	#47
Dick Johnson V8 Challenge	45	#46
Disciples	81	#43
Discworld Noir	83	#39
Dracula	58	#47
Drakan	84	#43
Driver	71	#43
● Dungeon Keeper 2	90	#41
Eastern Front II	85	#39
Eidos Official F1	65	#39
● Episode 1 Racer	90	#39

FLEET COMMAND

89% IN PCPP#39

Developer: Jane's

Publisher: EA

Distributor: EA

What we said then: "Track ID 5530! Inbound air object 150 miles at 270, altitude 25000 and falling, speed Mach 1.5 and increasing. Track 5530 identified as TU-22M Backfire! Track 5530 turning to 250. New tracks! Viper, Viper, Viper! Hot stuff... This will test your capacity to assimilate multiple information flows and make realtime decisions in credible scenarios."



● Everquest	90	#39
F22 Lightning 3	85	#40
● F/A 18 Hornet	91	#47
FA Prem. League Stars	71	#42
FIFA 2000	88	#45
Fighter Squadron	85	#37
Fighting Steel	80	#41
Final Fantasy VIII	77	#47
Fleet Command	89	#39
Flight Unlimited III	89	#43
Fly!	85	#42
● Force 21	90	#42
Fox Sports NBA 2000	56	#44
● Freespace 2	95	#44
Gabriel Knight III	87	#44
Gorky 17	65	#47
● GP 500	96	#43
Grand Theft Auto 2	84	#44
GTA London	75	#38
Gruntz	45	#37
Guardians of Darkness	30	#41
Gulf War: Desert Hammer	55	#45
● Half-Life: Opposing Force	90	#45

● Heavy Gear II	93	#40
HOMM III: Armageddon's Blade	70	#45
Hidden and Dangerous	88	#41
H & D: Fight for Freedom	45	#46
● Homeworld	95	#41
I-War: Defiance	72	#44
Imperialism 2	72	#37
● Imperium Galactica 2	92	#46
Indiana Jones & Infernal Machine	69	#45
Interstate '82	60	#47
Jagged Alliance 2	89	#42
Jane's USAF	86	#44
Jimmy White's Cueball 2	67	#38
Kingpin	86	#41
● Lander	95	#37
Lands of Lore 3	60	#38
Links 2000	79	#44
M25 Racer	25	#45
Madden NFL 2000	84	#44
● Machines	90	#38
Man of War II	15	#40
● Mechwarrior 3	91	#39
Microsoft Golf 99	80	#36



FLIGHT UNLIMITED III

Developer: Looking Glass

Publisher: EA

Distributor: EA

What we said then: "Flight Unlimited III focuses its attention on only one city - Seattle, USA - providing the most realistic environment in any domestic flight sim available. The immersion and depth of reality contained within the game is impressive to say the least."

89% IN PCPP#43



● 96% IN PCPP#43

GP 500

Developer: Melbourne House

Publisher: Microprose

Distributor: Hasbro

What we said then: "Gone are the days of flat dull tracks. Eye-candy spills gloriously from the monitor as your bike completes the circuit. Designed with both the expert and novice in mind, this title has set the benchmark for all future motorcycle sims."

SIM GAMES



GOLD AWARD
90-94



PLATINUM AWARD
95-100

TOCA 2

● **91% IN PCPP#37**

Developer: Codemasters

Publisher: Codemasters

Distributor: Ozisoft

What we said then: "TOCA! TOCA! TOCA! The collection of tracks in this series is amongst the finest ever seen on a computer screen. Do please take a look at TOCA 2, even if you're not a regular PC racer. Fun is fun, and TOCA 2 is nothing but."



Midtown Madness	89	#40	Pandora's Box	68	#47
● Mig Alley	92	#42	Panzer Elite	85	#46
Might & Magic VII	70	#40	Pharaoh	88	#45
Mike Stewart's Bodyboarding	34	#40	Phoenix	64	#46
MS Flight Sim 2000	84	#44	● Planescape: Torment	91	#46
NASCAR 3	89	#44	Prince of Persia 3D	65	#43
Nascar Road Racing	28	#41	Pro18 World Tour Golf	69	#38
Nascar Truck	80	#38	Pro Pinball: Fantastic Journey	88	#47
Nations: Fighter Command	82	#44	Puma Street Soccer	75	#46
NBA Inside Drive 2000	68	#46	● Quake III: Arena	93	#45
● NBA Live 2000	90	#45	Rainbow Six: Eagle Watch	86	#36
Need for Speed: High Stakes	89	#41	● Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear	92	#44
Nerf Arena	70	#46	Rally Championship 2000	88	#45
NHL Championship 2000	78	#46	Rayman 2	89	#45
Nocturne	79	#46	Re-Volt	82	#41
North vs. South	67	#37	Redline	83	#37
● Omikron: The Nomad Soul	93	#44	● Requiem - Avenging Angel	90	#38
Operation Art of War 2	84	#42	Resident Evil 2	88	#37
Outcast	59	#40	Revenant	82	#45

THE SIMS

Developer: Maxis

Publisher: EA

Distributor: EA

What we said then: "I picked up my mould-ridden plates and dumped them in the dishwasher, took out the trash, watered the plants, fed the goldfish, prepared dinner (and ate it), washed behind my ears and played a bit of chess against myself. Gee... life is swell. The Sims... will reward you in an amount directly proportional to the effort invested in it."



● **90% IN PCPP#47**

RE-VOLT

Developer: Probe

Publisher: Acclaim

Distributor: Acclaim

What we said then: "Re-Volt looks like a logical progression from Micro Machines... Throw in some weapons and powerups reminiscent of Mario Kart... and Re-Volt is the perfect distraction from endless deathmatches and empire building."



82% IN PCPP#41

● Rollcage	90	#38	SU-27 Flanker 2.0	83	#44
● Rollercoaster Tycoon	93	#36	● SWAT 3	90	#46
R'coaster Tyc: Added Attractions	81	#45	● System Shock 2	98	#42
Saga: Rage of the Vikings	42	#40	The Phantom Menace	76	#39
Sega Rally 2	68	#41	The Wheel of Time	84	#45
Septerra Core	84	#47	● Thief Gold	96	#45
Seven Kingdoms 2	86	#44	Theme Park World	80	#45
Shadow Company	74	#44	Thrust, Twist & Turn	30	#39
Shadow Man	61	#41	● TOCA 2	91	#37
Shane Warne Cricket	86	#37	Tomb Raider: Last Revelation	89	#43
Silver	84	#36	Total Annihilation: Kingdoms	84	#40
● The Sims	90	#47	Traitor's Gate	78	#44
Sin - Wages of Sin	73	#38	UEFA 98/99	71	#38
Skydive!	12	#42	Ultima IX: Ascension	70	#45
Slave Zero	55	#47	Unreal: Return to Na Pali	72	#41
Soul Reaver: Legacy Of Kain	81	#43	● Unreal Tournament	94	#45
South Park Rally	41	#47	Uprising 2	58	#36
Spec Ops 2	60	#46	Urban Chaos	85	#46
● Speedbusters	91	#36	Virtual Deep Sea Fishing	63	#38
Speed Demons	55	#47	Warbirds 2	81	#37
● Sports Car GT	90	#40	Warzone 2100	88	#38
● Star Trek: BOTF	90	#39	Worms Armageddon	83	#36
Star Trek: Hidden Evil	69	#46	● X-Wing Alliance	94	#37
Star Trek: Starfleet Command	87	#43			
● Starsiege	90	#37			



MIG ALLEY

Developer: Rowan

Publisher: Empire

Distributor: Metro

What we said then: "But how does it fly? Nudge up the throttle and the difference between a prop and a jet is suddenly very clear. The balance between straight-out flight sim and strategy game makes MIG Alley a great buy."

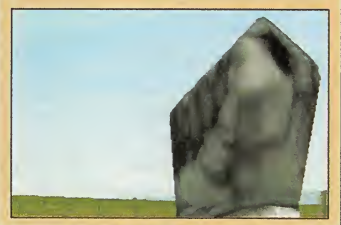
● **92% IN PCPP#42**

QUIZ!

WIN YOUR CHOICE OF THE BEST OF SIMS!

All you have to do is tell us which game this image comes from. (Clue: it's a small section of a screenshot published in PCPP.)

Send to the usual competitions address, marking your envelope to "Score List Quiz", and write your answer and which game of the eight featured in these pages you would like to win. Winners notified in PCPP#50.



Gameplay

HEADLINES: SWAT 3 Playguide • The Sims Playguide • Unreal Tournament Web Resources
• Classic Cheats Round-up • And of course the Great Bearded One



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THE ORACLE

He actually finished Ultima: Ascension, you know.

Gabriel Knight:
Blood of the
Sacred, Blood of
the Damned

Q> I am stuck on day two of Gabriel Knight. I can't open the secret compartment. It's pretty obvious it has something to do with the heads, but I can't figure out what. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Michael, Email

A> Pretty obvious indeed. But only once I'd realised which title in the Gabriel Knight series you were referring to. (A common experience this month, to my great regret.) As Grace, you will have examined the portrait on the wall, standing on the chair to gain a better view. Once you've flicked the switch under the desk and the laser beams are on, it's a case of adjusting the heads until they form a pentagram in the air. Shouldn't cause you too much trouble, I imagine.

Half-Life

Q> Not so long ago I was enticed into accepting a pirate copy of Half-Life from a friend of mine, I decided that I had to own it. At around the same time I decided this, the Game Of The Year Edition hit the shelves, so I bought it.



Now, before I went out and bought the "proper" version, I uninstalled the pirate version from my system. Upon installing my newly purchased version, it just wouldn't work. When I try to play the game, instead of actually starting up the game and running it, my screen just flicks a couple of times and I find myself back in Windows; the game refuses to run. I have tried everything that I can think of, I now turn to you so that you can try to help me, if you see fit. Help me Oracle, I am at my wits end.

Lachlan, VIC

A> You deserve what you get, I'd normally say. Nor am I your people's help desk. But since you repented your sin I'll aid you as I can. If you have tried all the usual tricks, like freeing up virtual memory, ensuring all your configs are correct, and all the rest of it, then it could be that the system specs for Game of the Year version are different from your filthy pirated copy. Or that it has given you a virus. Or you may simply have a bad disc, which happens extremely rarely but does happen. As for the rest of you, pirating is theft. Simple. You want

good games, fork out the money. And no one send me tech questions again. They bore me.

Grim Fandango

Q> I am currently stuck in Grim Fandango. I'm in the second or third year where I have to get a gold flake liqueur. I tried to pick it up, but the game doesn't register that it's there. Please help, as I have been stuck on this part for six months.

A. Nonymous, Email

A> Well, it is normally behind the bar the Calavera Café.

CODE

CLASSICS

While the Oracle was dozing (*And, believe me, he needs a nap at his age - Ed*), we managed to smuggle in this month's code. These are the codes you've been requesting most vociferously.

Age of Empires II

Press Enter while playing to bring up the chat box, then type the following codes:

ROCK ON - 1000 stone
LUMBERJACK - 1000 wood

ROBIN HOOD - 1000 gold
CHEESE STEAK JIMMY'S - 1000 food

MARCO - reveal map
POLO - remove shadow

AEGIS - fast build
NATURAL WONDERS - control nature

RESIGN - instant loss
WIMPYWIMPYWIMPY - destroy yourself

I LOVE THE MONKEY

HEAD - gives VDML

HOW DO YOU TURN

THIS ON - gives Cobra car



Try this. End the conversation with Olivia by saying: "Well, catch ya later, hep chick". Go one screen back and use Salvador's letters on the 3 guys sitting in the right bottom corner. On the table there is a book you should take. Go outside turn right and use the book on the bees. Hopefully the flask will be there now. If it's still not, go and ensure that you have completed all of the quests.

Fallout 2

Q> I need help with Fallout 2. I am in New Reno and have taken

up Mrs Bishop's offer of, hmm... companionship. She is asleep and I have opened all the safes and killed one guard who turned up after the trap on Mr Bishop's safe exploded. Can I get out without having to kill all of Bishop's henchmen? I am playing as Narg and have only Goris the scholar as a companion (and I don't know where he is right now).

Simon Marshall, Email

A> After you sleep with her, she'll mumble the combination of the wall safe in her sleep. It contains a necklace and some other goodies. The safe in the

north room has a map that gives you the location of the Raiders, and also proof that the Raiders are actually mercs hired by Bishop. Beware that this safe is trapped! If you set off the trap, you'll alert Bishop's men, and that is not a good thing. If you don't have high enough Traps skill, there's a trick you can use to get by it. Just arm an Explosive, and drop it right underneath the safe. Then go hide at the NE corner of the swimming pool. When the Explosive detonates (also triggering the trap at the same time :-), Bishop's man comes to investigate.

He doesn't find anything, and goes away again. Now you can open the safe and pilfer the contents!

Baldur's Gate

Q> Hello there wise one, if you could just give me some little hints about Baldur's Gate I would be very thankful. Can you please tell me how to get to the Bandit's Camp and who to speak to. I have the message in my journal about knowing that the bandits use the Woods of Sharp Teeth as their hideout, but I just can't seem to find the guy to talk to. Have I missed a vital

CODE

TORPEDO X - kill opponent X (where X is a number)
TO SMITHEREENS - spawn a Saboteur
BLACK DEATH - destroy all enemies
I R WINNER - instant victory

Heroes of Might & Magic III

While in the game, press Tab and type in the following codes:
NWONLYAMODEL - builds all buildings in your castle
NWCSIRROBIN - immediate failure
NWCTROJANRABBIT - immediate success
NWCAVERTINGCOUNREYES - hero gets 35 archangels
NWCANTIOCH - hero gets tent, ballista, and ammo cart
NWCIGOTBETTER - hero gains one level
NWCCASTLEANTHRAX - hero receives highest luck
NWCCOCONUTS - hero receives unlimited move points
NWCMUCHREJOICING - hero receives highest morale
NWCALREADYGOTONE - reveals puzzle map
NWCGENERALDIRECTION - reveals entire world map
NWCSHRUBBERY - increases all resources
NWCTIM - hero receives all magic and 999 spell points
NWCFLESHWOUND - hero gains Death Knights

Half-Life

To enter the following cheat codes you must edit the Half-Life shortcut on your Start menu as follows:
 1. Right-click on the Start icon on the Windows task bar.

2. Click on Open.
 3. Find Half-Life and right-click on it.
 4. Click on Properties.
 5. Change the command line to read:

C:\Sierra\Half-Life\hl.exe -dev

6. To use these codes, press tilde (~) while playing, then enter the desired code:

CODE

/god - god mode
/god o - disables god mode
/noclip - walk through walls and virtual flight

Unreal Tournament

The following codes are for single player only. Press tilde (~) to bring down the console, then type:

IAMTHEONE - activate cheat mode

GOD - God mode

LOADED - all weapons

ALLAMMO - all ammo

GHOST - walk through walls

FLY - Fly mode

WALK - Walk mode

KILLALL [class] - kills all enemies of the class you type

PLAYERONLY - freezes time; type code again to unfreeze

BEHINDVIEW 1 - toggle view from behind

BEHINDVIEW o - toggle normal view

OPEN [map name] - jump to the map you type

SUMMON [item] - summon item:

WarHeadLauncher, Enforcer, DoubleEnforcer, Minigun, PulseGun, ShockRifle, SniperRifle, UT_BioRifle, UT_Eightball, UT_FlackCannon, Chainsaw

Quake 3: Arena

Unlock all levels at Skill 1: Bring down console and type: **/IAMACHEATER**.

Unlock all levels at Skill 100: Bring down console and type: **/IAMAMONKEY**.

Multiplayer cheats:

In order to use the following cheats in multiplayer mode, the server must have cheats enabled (that is: **/devmap +map [name]**)

God mode: Bring down console and type: **/GOD**. All weapons: Bring down console and type: **/GIVE ALL**.

More items using **/GIVE**: Type **/GIVE** followed by the following codes to receive the corresponding items: HEALTH, ARMOR, AMMO, PERSONAL TELEPORTER, QUAD DAMAGE.



part in the looking for the camp? Also can you tell me what where to find all the best Magic equipment for the Mage?

The Nameless One, Email

A> I'm assuming this is the quest that Drizzt gives to you. I don't know for sure as your email is poorly written and not specific (and I've repaired it as best I could). People, I've told you this before, give me exact details or you simply won't get an answer.

But talk to Drizzt: Area S-SW of Beregost (x:2644, y:2107) and he'll tell you what to do. Or you are talking Tazok and his men. First, fight him to prove your worth. Then he is in the Big Tent (x:3588, y:900). As you near the tent you will be attacked by its defences. Just get through them and kill him. If these are not what you are after, then I suggest next time you take more than 20 seconds to send me scrawl.

As for the best equipment for a mage, well, there is so damn much of it floating about that it's hard to be specific. But at High Hedge, Thalantr can give you a lot

of groovy magical stuff. The Nashkel Carnival, and especially Sorcerous Sundries in Baldur's Gate itself, can sell you many, many wands and the like. Also, search any magician that you fight thoroughly.

Betrayal At Krondor

Q> Hey oracle, could you please help me in Betrayal At Krondor? Can you please give me some cheat codes and send the answers to me via email. I am in Chapter 2 and my characters have become 'PLAGUED' and I can't heal them, I just came out of Silden, PLEASE HELP!

Witless, Email

A> I give no cheats nor do I email. Please don't ask me again. I have no desire to enter into any correspondence with you spotty gamers. But for a cure, continue into town and left-click on the ship on the right side of the screen - it will take you to the Temple of Eortis on Temple Isle. Inside the temple, left-click on the curtains that lead into the cloisters and then choose



the TALK option from the menu. The priestess will cure you of the plague as you leave. Simple as that. Aren't clerics the nicest?

Grand Theft Auto

Q> I've completed Grand Theft Auto and GTA: London without cheating. However I cannot for the life of me hijack a car, truck or bus. I've tried everything, and it's very embarrassing for the boss when my hijacking score is zero. Please help.

Jared Mansfield, VIC

A> RTFM, baby. Walk up to the car at the traffic lights, and when a car has pulled up, simply press the Steal Car key, which is usually the Enter button. When that does not work, look at the box. There is a possibility you are probably playing a different game.

Planescape: Torment

Q> My friend says there is a thing called the Rubicon in Planescape: Torment where you fight lots of modrons and get another companion. But he's a %#!* and won't tell me how to get there. Can you please help me out with this oracle?

Peter Frempton, Email

A> I had to edit this letter down from about 5 times its original size. Be precise people.

OK. In the Clerks Ward go to the Curiosity Shoppe. Buy the Modron Figurine. Go into the Brothel of Slating Intellectual Lusts and find the three Modrons in the centre. Ask them about the figure. Now you have to bend the Left Knee, extend the Left Wing, then the Right Wing, the rotate the Right Arm, in that order. It's pretty simple when you try it.

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THIS MONTH: UNREAL TOURNAMENT ESSENTIAL FILES WITH ELIH BRADING



Unreal Tournament Bonus Pack

www.unrealtournament.com

The developer behind Unreal Tournament, Epic, has released a free add-on pack as a thank-you to the gamers who purchased the full version of the game. While most developer's bonuses are a model or map for the game, the UT bonus pack is such an extravagant exercise, Epic could have boxed it for sale on the shelves. It features three new skins, six new DM maps and four new CTF maps.

If the collection of new maps isn't good enough, the bonus pack also supports "relics", rune-type (runes featured first in multiplayer Quake) powerups that are randomly spawned throughout any of UT's game modes. They can be added and accessed through the Mutators menu.

There are six relics available for gameplay addition: The Relic of Strength, The Relic of Regeneration, The Relic of Defence, The Relic of Speed, The Relic of

Redemption, and the all-powerful Relic of Vengeance. Collecting these provides a temporary boost to the relevant statistics - an increase in running speed or more hit points being obvious examples. Like most rune/tech-based games, you can only carry one powerup at a time, and you are relieved of their (joyous) burden when you die.

These bonus packs reinforce Epic's continual support of the Tournament public and are active encouragement to get the community moving on mods, maps, models, skins and other gamely additions.

Note that although this bonus pack is compatible with previous versions of Unreal Tournament, you should grab the latest patch from this month's CD.



Mod of the Month

www.planetunreal.com/infiltration/

Name: Infiltration

Type: Team

Due: The first version has been released

Infiltration is a team-based mod that boasts perhaps the most comprehensive arsenal of realistic weaponry of any firstperson shooter ever created. With a munitions store ranging from pistols to machineguns, shotguns to hand grenades and machetes to anti-tank vehicles, Infiltration is sure to satisfy even the Major himself. All in all, there are over 25 weapons to play with!

Infiltration aims to transform the existing UT into a realistic combat shooter, with hoards of

realistic location-based maps on the cards. Considering the success of Action Quake2, it will probably come as no surprise to see a plethora of maps generated by humble followers of the mod. The possibilities for realistic locations are endless - the Whitehouse, a supermarket, a bank - all of these locations make for an enjoyable team-based game.

Map of the Month

www.planetunreal.com

Name: AS-Bridge

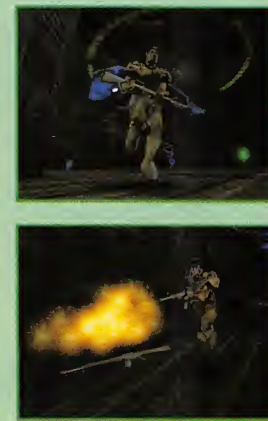
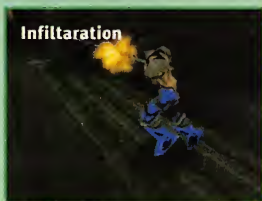
Mode: Assault

Type: Realistic Bridge Combat Simulation

Players: 16

(recommended, though bots can be spawned)

What more can be said



about a map that the lead level designer of UT, Cliffy B. describes as "the current pinnacle of what UT's Assault is about"?

The map revolves around the control of a key landmark that has been evident throughout time - a transport bridge. While one team attempts to detonate the four key support pilons, the defending team will try to prevent the onslaught. Starting on the base level by the valley stream, attacking players will need to climb a series of levels to get to the actual bridge itself. It's here where the majority of the action takes place as players scramble to detonate the packs in the shortest time possible. From the moment you crash through the initial barricade to the concluding collapse of the bridge, the map consistently emanates quality.

You all know how much fun the original Assault

maps were. AS-Bridge exceeds both these and your wildest expectations, providing you've got the machine to run it. AS-Bridge only starts to get intense with 12 players or above, at which the average users machine is likely to start chugging along.

Skin of the Month

www.planetunreal.com

Name: Knights

Model: Multiple

■ The "Knights" skin pack contains an armoury of skins that fit the castle theme of Unreal Tournament like Maid Marian and Robin Hood. The Unreal Tournament skinning community is, at present, relatively shy. Hopefully we'll see it take off soon, but for the moment, the "Knights" collection is at the peak of what's currently available.

UT Utility

www.planetunreal.com

Name: Umod Wizard



AS Bridge Assault Map

■ The Umod Wizard is an essential tool for any of you who wish to distribute your modified UT files across the Internet, be it for public use or just for your friends.

A Umod (Unreal Module) file is much like a Winzip archive, only more advanced. Not only does it

compress your files, it makes it possible to extract different files into different directories - all as a fully automated process. What this means is that all the user needs to do is point the .umod unzipper to their UT directory and the installer will do the rest.

The Umod wizard

makes the creation of these Module's a breeze - even the new users should have no trouble at all. Be it a new skin, map, mod or even a simple config file, this UT Utility is as simple as it is powerful.

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THE SIMS Playguide

BY MURRAY PHILBRICK

■ The Sims is one of those games that could go on forever! So many options, so many lives to live. But it's not as easy as it looks! Burglars, fires, appliances spontaneously exploding - there's a lot of things stacked against you. Use some of these tips to climb further up the tree of virtual success.

Tips and Tricks at a Glance

■ Hire a maid! Even the lowest-paying job will allow you to afford a maid straight off the bat, and 10 Simoleons a day is all it should cost you if you live in a suitably small house. Leave your Sim's neat skill at zero to make the most of the maid's cleaning up, and save yourself a lot of time in the process!

■ If your Sim has all the skills necessary for

a promotion but just doesn't seem to be able to become happy enough before the car pool arrives to actually get it, chances are your house isn't as good as it should be at your current job level. Some home improvements should fix that problem! You might also want to put a few plants between the front door and the footpath on the way to the car.

■ Flush the toilet after every other use. Not doing so for several uses can mean the toilet will clog and overflow, requiring a bit of cleaning up on your part (or your maid's).

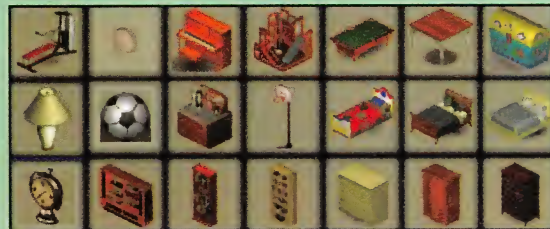
■ Keep an eye out for new mail, and don't forget to pay those bills!

■ Each kid you have gives you 10% less to pay each time the bills roll in.



"Must resist... the temptation... to eat... the children!"





ESSENTIAL PURCHASES FOR HAPPY SIMS

There are some items you absolutely NEED in order to keep your Sims happy; a toilet, shower, stove, fridge, bed(s), phone (which you should probably place on a bedside table next to the bed... funnily enough).

Burglars have an uncanny knack for coming along while your Sims are asleep) and a TV are the minimum you should try using if you want them to stay reasonably happy. This should leave you with a bit of extra money if you were suitably modest with your wall-building and carpet-laying, amongst which you should buy a smoke detector to place over the stove.



■ Sims prefer oddly-shaped rooms to square or rectangular ones.

■ It is possible to build stairs outside, rather than inside, in order to save space.

■ If you have Sims die on your property, be sure to mourn them once in a while. If you don't, they'll reappear as ghosts and spook your Sims!

■ Once you get to the point where watering your plants tends to be high on your Sim's list of priorities, hiring a gardener instead will save you still more valuable time, and is well worth the effort.

■ Buy an alarm clock. This wakes you up with two hours before the car pool arrives, but it'll wake up anyone asleep in the room, even if their car

pool arrives at a different time. Don't forget to send anyone who needs more sleep right back to bed; it'll ring again two hours before their car pool, too.

■ When building your house on a corner block, be sure that its front door is on the same side as (and preferably close to) your mailbox and outside garbage can. This is always the side the car pool arrives on, and having to run around half the house to reach it on time can push your Sim's luck.

■ On a similar note, if your house has a back door you'll probably want to fence off the backyard, even if it doesn't take up the entire block. This will stop your Sim from occasionally taking the long way 'round to the car pool when it arrives, as happens with an open back yard.

■ Always make sure you have a phone by your Sim's bed so they can call the police on a burglar as soon as possible if necessary.

■ A motion sensing alarm in the rooms with your most valuable items can be invaluable in the long run.

■ A smoke detector over both your stove and any fireplaces can save your valuable furniture (oh, uh, and your Sims, of course).

■ Cheaper fireplaces have a tendency to set fire to nearby furniture fairly easily, so try to give them breathing room of at least two or three squares of floor space in all directions.

■ Buy a food processor as soon as you can! Cooking is one of the most time-consuming tasks your Sim has to perform, and anything that cuts down

the time spent on it can be a godsend.

■ If you lose your job, you'll have to start back on the bottom run of whatever new career path you take next... even if it's the same path you were on before.

■ A day off work once in a while is fine, but two days off in a row will get you fired. You can even push your luck and take every second day off if you're feeling particularly lazy.

■ Avoid eating snacks unless time is really pressing. Having a meal, even a quick one, is much more effective at sating a Sim's hunger.

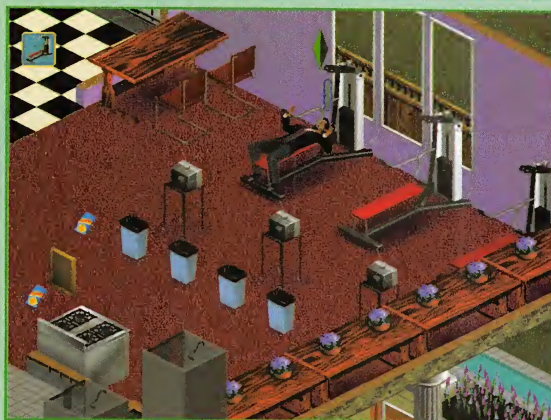
■ Unless your Sim's mechanical skill is fairly high, don't let him or her try to repair a broken electrical item. \$50 an hour to repair something



Mmmm... French maid...



DIY repairing isn't easy



Murray is clearly insane.



"Yeah! Alright, get down!
All the children in the
house say Owwww!"



Beware strangers bearing
gifts. Especially if they've
got marriage then murder on
their mind

may seem steep, but it beats your little Sim being fried after a botched attempt.

■ Generally, a coffee or espresso will only give you a little extra energy necessary to perform one quick action before heading to bed.

Moving In

While knowing what your Sim's personality is like is all well and good, having him sleep in a gutter isn't much of an option on the road to having a happy Sim. Having a nice big armchair in a gutter for him to sleep in is slightly better, but before you

begin picking out fabric, you might want to be sure to have a nice gutter to put it in.

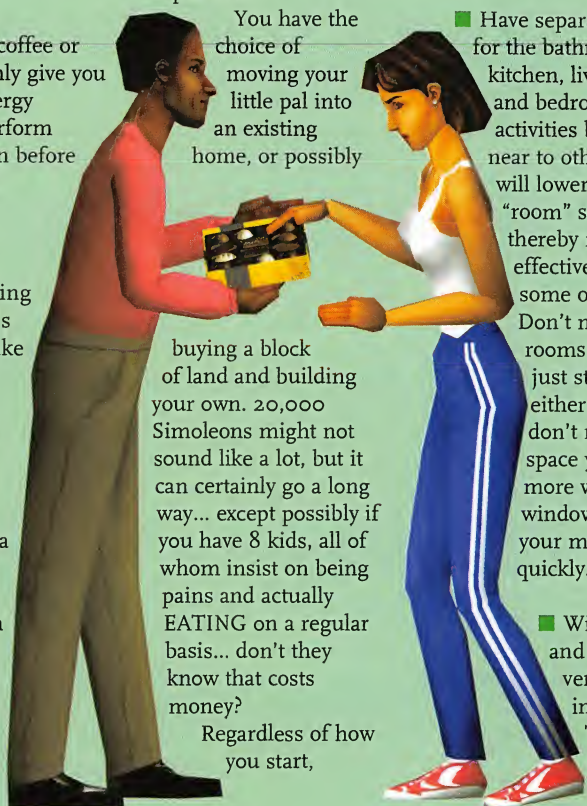
You have the choice of moving your little pal into an existing home, or possibly buying a block of land and building your own. 20,000 Simoleons might not sound like a lot, but it can certainly go a long way... except possibly if you have 8 kids, all of whom insist on being pains and actually EATING on a regular basis... don't they know that costs money?

Regardless of how you start,

though, you'll probably want to make sure of the following:

■ Have separate rooms for the bathroom, kitchen, living room, and bedroom. Some activities being done near to other sims will lower the "room" score, and thereby reduce the effectiveness of some objects. Don't make the rooms too large just starting out, either... you don't need the space yet, and more walls and windows chew your money up quickly.

■ Windows and light are very important. The more light, the



DIRTY TRICK NO.1

The "Serial Murderer" Trick

In need of a little extra money? Create a new Sim with his or her "outgoing" and "friendly" scores fairly high, as well as having any points left over put into "active", then get the Sim moved onto a new block of land near to the house of the Sim in need of money. Jump back into the game as the money-hungry Sim and when the new neighbour comes walking by, rush out and greet him. It may require a day off work, but talk the new neighbour up until he or she agrees to marry or move in with your Sim. This transfers their current net worth to your little buddy (leaving all their previous items in their old home for another newcomer, I might add). Then, to save on food bills because, hey, you were just using the new neighbour for money anyway, move him or her out into a corner of the block you're sure you won't be using, and then use the build tool to surround them with a wall. It's horrible, it's gruesome, and yes, they will simply stand about screaming for help and wetting themselves until they starve to death, but if your conscience can stand it you'll be 20,000 Simoleons richer. I didn't say it was pretty.



While everyone slept the fishtank quietly made its murderous plans...



higher the "room" score, and the more effective the items in that room will be at increasing your Sim's various scores. Try to have at least a couple of decent-sized windows per room at a minimum.

■ Outside of the essentials, you should consider the following items with any spare cash first (though not in any particular order): a bookshelf, a stereo, a chest of drawers, and possibly a burglar alarm (place it in the room with your most valuable items) and a second phone to place strategically away from the other one. You will probably also want a bit of bench or table space, a bin to save the long walk out the front, and, if the money will stretch so far, you may want to invest in the medium-sized TV for the sake of your "fun" score.

■ Once you get a job, hire both a gardener and a maid right away. For the most part, the maid won't be too expensive to hire even from the very start, and she'll save your Sims a lot of time cleaning up after themselves. A gardener might also help if you've for some

reason bought a lot of plants, or at least have some that need watering about the place.

■ Try to avoid frivolous spending for the first little while... and yes,

I'm afraid that DOES mean that you should hold off on those VR goggles for now. You should probably also hold off on paintings and suchlike to raise the "room" score just yet... there are other things you should probably consider buying first.

■ Don't forget to pay your bills! When the little red flag on the mailbox is up, have one of your Sims go out and check the mail, and then immediately pay the bills. If you leave bills unpaid for a day or two you'll receive a red warning notice, and if the initial bill is still lying around unpaid, your Sims might actually try to pay the

same bill twice (and the finance company apparently has no issues with taking two times the money for no reason)! Always pay them as soon

as you get them... there's nothing worse than finally buying that huge wall TV only to have it repossessed the next day...



Moan, moan, moan. Get up and go to work you lazy bum

DIRTY TRICK NO. 2

The "Damn, I Knew I Should've Bought An Alarm!" Trick

When a burglar invades your home and your Sim seems to be spending an eternity bitching about your waking him up while his oven gets thrown into a small sack, it can be a simple matter of going to the "build" tool and walling the burglar in until the authorities can arrive to haul him off!



SWAT 3 Playguide

BY BRETT ROBINSON

Let Brett Robinson lob a few flashbangs to clear the way through Sierra's tricky tactical shooter.

General Tactics

Always be aware of what your bullets may penetrate should they pass through or miss your target. Bullets passing through walls and doors can easily kill hostages, civilians and even fellow element members.

When entering rooms where suspects may be concealed, use the SWAT technique known as 'slicing the pie'. This involves slowly edging around the open doorway in small increments that afford the player a progressively larger view of the room's interior. Use

of the lean keys when slicing the pie enables the player to keep their lower body protected by the wall, while enabling them to peek around the edge of the doorway. If the player does not spot any suspects, it can sometimes be prudent to use the Optiwand. This is particularly true for large rooms where suspects may be concealed in distant corners or in other areas where they may not be immediately visible. Use of the Optiwand is also encouraged when T intersections and corners in hallways are encountered.

Before entering completely darkened rooms (or those where suspects may be concealed), crouch to the side of the doorway and lob several CS canisters into the far corners, then listen for the coughing and spluttering of the

room's occupants. Swiftly move into the room, immediately ordering any suspects to surrender.

Ideally, flashbangs should be deployed just inside the doorway that an element is about to enter. That way, collateral smoke conceals the element members. Flashbangs are explosive devices that can maim or kill if detonated in close proximity to a person. For this reason, it is best to avoid lobbing flashbangs deep into rooms: particularly when civilians or hostages may be present.

As noted elsewhere, 'beanbag' rounds are virtually useless: especially against armoured suspects. Because of the limited (8 round) capacity of the beanbag round magazines, players will often find that they have failed to disarm a suspect by the time a clip runs out. Those who insist on



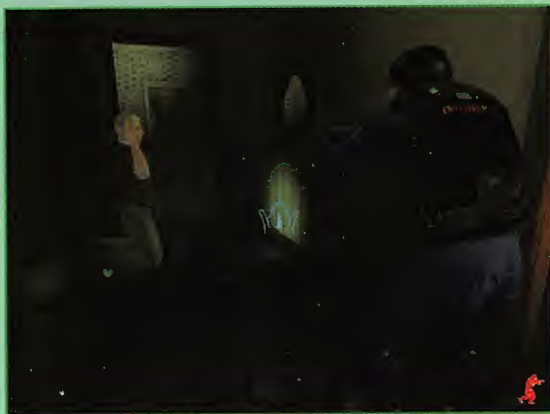
using these 'humanitarian' rounds do so at significant risk to the welfare of themselves, hostages and fellow element members.

While not particularly humane (or legal), vindictive players can vent their frustrations on handcuffed suspects. Induce migraines and bouts of violent coughing with flashbangs and CS canisters strategically lobbed at their feet.

Ensure that the

surrounding area is clear of other suspects before cuffing compliant suspects, civilians and hostages. Many suspects have a nasty habit of coming to the aid of their comrades at the least opportune moment. This rule also applies when relaying situational update messages to TOC. Ditto for collecting weapons left lying around, and those dropped by downed suspects.

Listen carefully to radio



MISSION-SPECIFIC TACTICS

The very first mission (involving the arrest of a crazed sniper) serves as an excellent training tool. Successful completion 10 times in a row will sufficiently verse the player in the multitude of hiding spots utilised by suspects later in the game.

In the mission involving the location and disabling of concealed SAM sites, lob several canisters of CS into the deep quarries before attempting to subdue the heavily armed and armoured suspects. Move slowly and methodically throughout the site, making sure to cover any and all potential positions of suspect concealment.

Try to become familiar with the general layout of the LA Convention Centre (where E3 is held annually) in the first VIP Detail mission. Several subsequent missions will occur within the Centre.

The Sewer operation is easily the most frustrating mission in SWAT3. The almost total lack of illumination and maze-like tunnels make it very easy to get lost. Religiously use Lightsticks to mark tunnels and other areas that have already been traversed. Check targets before firing, as element members have a habit of lagging behind and getting lost. And don't use weapons or incendiary tactical aids (like Flashbangs or CS) in areas filled with gas. The Lightstick marking tactic also works extremely well in the opening stages of the hostage rescue mission at the Bank.



updates from TOC, especially those immediately following a 'suspect in custody' announcement. Interrogated suspects often reveal important information about the locations of fellow suspects and hostages, as well as suspect numbers.

Though hopelessly inefficient in illuminating darkened areas, lightsticks make excellent room markers. Deploy them at entrances to rooms when they have been cleared of suspects, hostages and weapons. This reduces the likelihood of the player accidentally doubling back over covered ground.

Weapons

HK MP5

Hackler & Koch's standard MP5 is lightweight and very accurate, though somewhat lacking in knockdown power. Its

small size allows it to be brought to bear quickly, making it ideal for use in missions where an assault rifle or shotgun would simply be too unwieldy.

HK MP5SD

Fitted with an integrated suppressor, the MP5SD is perfect for missions where stealth takes precedence over power or accuracy. Such is the effectiveness of the suppressor, the decibel level of a round being chambered is actually higher than that of the weapon firing. Virtual silence comes at a price, however: the suppressor hampers the weapon's accuracy, and reduces bullet velocity by between 200 and 400 feet per second. This significant reduction in velocity renders the weapon virtually useless at medium range, and necessitates the

unwavering use of FMJ rounds.

M4A1

Arguably the most powerful weapon in SWAT3, the M4A1 is capable of effortlessly punching through body armour using standard JHP rounds; a single, well-placed shot is often sufficient to incapacitate a heavily armoured suspect. The 'A1' is perfect for taking down suspects barricaded behind walls, steel doors and environmental objects. It also retains an impressive degree of power and accuracy at medium and long ranges. The exceptional power of this weapon dictates that extreme caution must be exercised when firing it. Wayward bullets may travel through several walls before their velocity is reduced to sub-lethal levels. This makes the

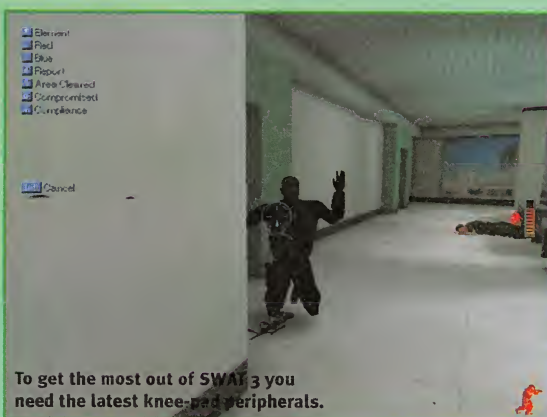
GAMEPLAY

It was a tense moment, a Mexican stand-off in the hotel kitchen. The two men could see the white's in each others eyes: they'd both rather die than do the washing up tonight.



DON'T QUICKLOAD, RE-LOAD

With firing rates well in excess of 800 rounds per minute, SWAT3's automatic weapons empty a full clip in a matter of seconds. To avoid having to reload at a crucial moment, constantly employ the practice known as 'Tactical Reloading'. This involves reloading after every few shots, and serves to ensure that the current weapon is never without ammunition. To conserve ammunition, fire in short bursts and only resort to full automatic fire in dire emergencies.



To get the most out of SWAT 3 you need the latest knee-ped peripherals.



Ar's use in hostage situations particularly risky.

Benelli M1 Super 90

The Benelli 12-gauge shotgun is an excellent weapon for quickly taking down of armed threats. However, its refire delay means that hitting the suspect with the first blast is absolutely essential. Although the spread pattern of the nine shots in each shell is relatively narrow, use of the Super 90 in situations where suspects remain in close proximity to hostages and civilians is distinctly hazardous.

SA 1911-A1

The LAPD SWAT's handgun of choice, the SA 1911-A1 can be brought to bear with lightning speed, and reloaded with equal rapidity. Its accuracy and power are quite

impressive, making it an ideal backup weapon and an excellent substitute for any of the larger weapons in the SWAT arsenal.

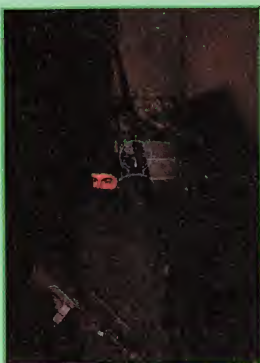
Ammunition (Standard)

Selecting the right ammunition for the job is just as important as selecting the right weapon - if not more so. Within SWAT 3, there are two basic types of ammunition: Jacketed Hollow Point (JHP) and Full Metal Jacket (FMJ). The default ammunition type for both handguns and rifles, JHP rounds feature a recessed tip that limits armour penetration potential but maximises the damage inflicted. JHP rounds have a tendency to tumble within the body of a target, tearing messily through tendons and bones, and creating horrific exit wounds. It is interesting to note that

the use of JHP rounds in warfare is prohibited under numerous UN conventions, yet their use by paramilitary and law enforcement entities within signatory countries is deemed perfectly acceptable.

FMJ rounds are shrouded by a solid cupro-zinc covering or 'jacket' that minimises bullet distortion on impact, leading to markedly increased armour penetration potential. FMJ rounds travel at much higher velocities than JHP rounds, and wounds inflicted are generally 'cleaner' as a result of their improved strength and stability.

The type of ammunition that should be employed in a given situation is dependent upon a number of factors. Primarily, whether or not suspects are wearing body



Always kill on an un-carpeted floor. The cleaning is much easier.



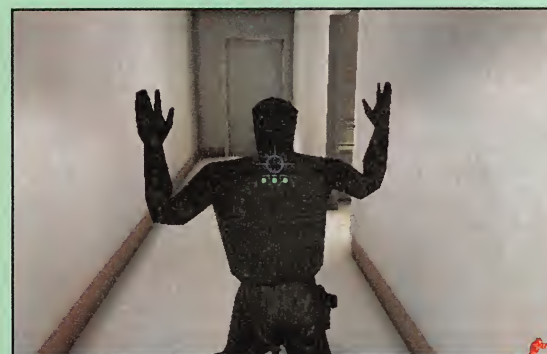
armour will be the major determinant of ammunition used. The number of hostages present and the tactical environment also govern ammunition choice. In general, JHP rounds are ideal for use in enclosed environments, and against unarmoured suspects. Skilled marksmen may compensate for the JHP round's inability to penetrate armour by aiming for the head. In situations where hostages are present, JHP rounds are undeniably the 'safer' of the two types, as the reduced velocity and penetration of these rounds substantially diminishes the likelihood of inadvertent (civilian and element) casualties and fatalities. A trade-off of this inherently lower velocity is a comparable reduction in the effectiveness of JHP rounds at medium range.

Ammunition (Special)

The secondary ammunition type for element leaders equipped with the M4A1 is the Atlantis Arms Punch or 'beanbag' round. Billed as less than lethal, these rounds comprise lead shot enclosed in an acrylic mesh bag and are designed to disperse their velocity over a broad surface area. Unfortunately, the less than lethal nature of beanbag rounds is highly subjective, as close range shots to the head, neck and torso often prove fatal. Shots to other areas of the body are often insufficient in disarming suspects or gaining suspect compliance. The re-fire delay experienced when using these rounds is often great enough to allow 'beanbagged' suspects to loose off several shots, placing the player's life in jeopardy.

Combined, these traits negate the usefulness of beanbag rounds; their abandonment in favour of the standard JHP rounds is advised.

The standard shell for the Benelli M1 Super 90 is the Tactical 00 Buckshot, the characteristics of which have been discussed above. The secondary ammunition type available to element members armed with the Super 90 is the 12-Gauge Frangible Breaching Load. Used primarily for destroying door locks, these rounds permit rapid entry into buildings and rooms. Their limited penetration characteristics often render body shots against suspects at medium range less than lethal. For this reason, they can be successfully used to breach closed doors, then immediately used to disarm any barricaded suspects.



IT'S ALL ABOUT RESPECT

Following each mission, the player receives a leadership rating. This rating is calculated based on a number of factors including bravery, an ability to effectively manage an element, frequency of reports to TOC, and several other considerations. The leadership rating directly influences the performance of element members. Element Leaders with poor ratings will find that other element members will act in a semi-autonomous manner, frequently and flagrantly disregarding orders. Conversely, element members will follow orders from a leader with a high rating to the letter. The most efficient ways of achieving a high rating are through radioing constant (and accurate) situational updates to TOC, collection of weapons, minimal suspect and civilian deaths, and actually taking personal risks rather than constantly letting other element members do all the work.

HARDWARE HAPPENINGS

TECHNEWS



SILICON STATE OF THE ART WITH **HUGH NORTON SMITH**

POWERPLAY BUYER'S GUIDE

HARD DRIVES

We all want our computers to move faster: new video cards, snazzy CPUs and massive amounts of memory. However, one of the most frequently overlooked bottlenecks in any new system is the lowly hard drive. Many people spend their money on a blazing new Athlon setup, and are left wondering why their system still feels so slow. If you're sick and tired of being the last to enter a Quake3 level, or constantly deleting MP3s so that you can install a new game, a new hard drive might be the solution. Although it might not seem as glamorous a solution as installing a new video card or CPU, a new hard disk will bring manifold improvements to the desktop.

have forced us to adopt far larger drives. Industry figures suggest a massive 60% annual growth in average megabytes per drive. Essentially, this means that the average size of a hard disk will double every one and a half years.

With the price of drives at an all time low, we highly recommend buying a drive with at least 20GB of space - this should provide ample room for games, MP3s and bloated Microsoft applications. Maybe even a second operating system!

More Performance

As of late, hard disks have gone through a performance renaissance. The most important

expensive. The onboard disk cache is equally important for achieving decent performance. Choosing a drive with a large cache will ensure far fewer disk hits. Most disks come equipped with 512k of disk cache, although buying a drive with a larger cache is worth bearing in mind.

One of the major issues facing a prospective hard drive purchaser is the decision between an IDE and SCSI hard drive. In essence, IDE offers the tantalising benefit of many gigabytes for cheap, while SCSI promises marginally better performance at a higher cost. Although IDE hard drives can be attached directly to a standard motherboard, SCSI devices require the purchase of a separate PCI controller card or a motherboard with built-in SCSI support. Naturally, this makes a SCSI based system considerably more expensive. Other benefits of a SCSI system include the ability to link up to 12 separate devices on the same channel. This is known as 'daisy chaining'. SCSI also offers slightly lower CPU overheads during large data transfers. However, with the advent of ATA/66, IDE offers performance

"...THE AVERAGE SIZE OF A HARD DISK WILL DOUBLE EVERY YEAR AND A HALF..."

More Space

Hard drive space has come a long way in the past few years. Only a decade ago, a high-end home computer might have featured a diminutive 50MB hard disk. Today, 50MB can't even store a single modern game. Trends in software development, particularly multimedia,

factor to consider is the spindle speed of the drive. This is measured in revolutions per minute. Currently, there are three standard varieties to consider: 5,400rpm, 7,200rpm and 10,000 rpm disks. We recommend people avoid the obsolescent 5,400rpm drives in favour of 7,200rpm. 10,000rpm remains prohibitively

STORAGE JARGON

IDE

IDE (Integrated Drive Electronics) is the most common interface used between a computer's motherboard and any peripheral devices. IDE gets its name because the drive controller is built into the hard drive's main circuit board. Most modern computers use EIDE, an enhanced version of IDE.

SCSI

SCSI (pronounced 'Skuh-Zee') is the acronym for the Small Computer Systems Interface. Developed at Apple Computer, SCSI is generally more flexible than IDE, at a significant premium. The latest SCSI devices use significantly less CPU overhead and can be 'daisy chained'.

ATA/33

Back in 1997, one of the most acclaimed features of the Intel TX chipset was its support for ATA/33. By definition, ATA/33 allows for burst transfer rates at 33.3Mb/s over the IDE bus. Initially perceived as a competitor for SCSI, it has now been superseded by ATA/66.

ATA/66

Also known as DMA/66, ATA/66 is the latest ATA standard, with a maximum 'on-paper' throughput of 66.6Mb/s.

Disk Cache

A small amount of memory, which speeds up

transfers to and from a hard disk. Located on the bottom of the hard disk, the cache stores data that has been recently read and pieces that are likely to be read next.

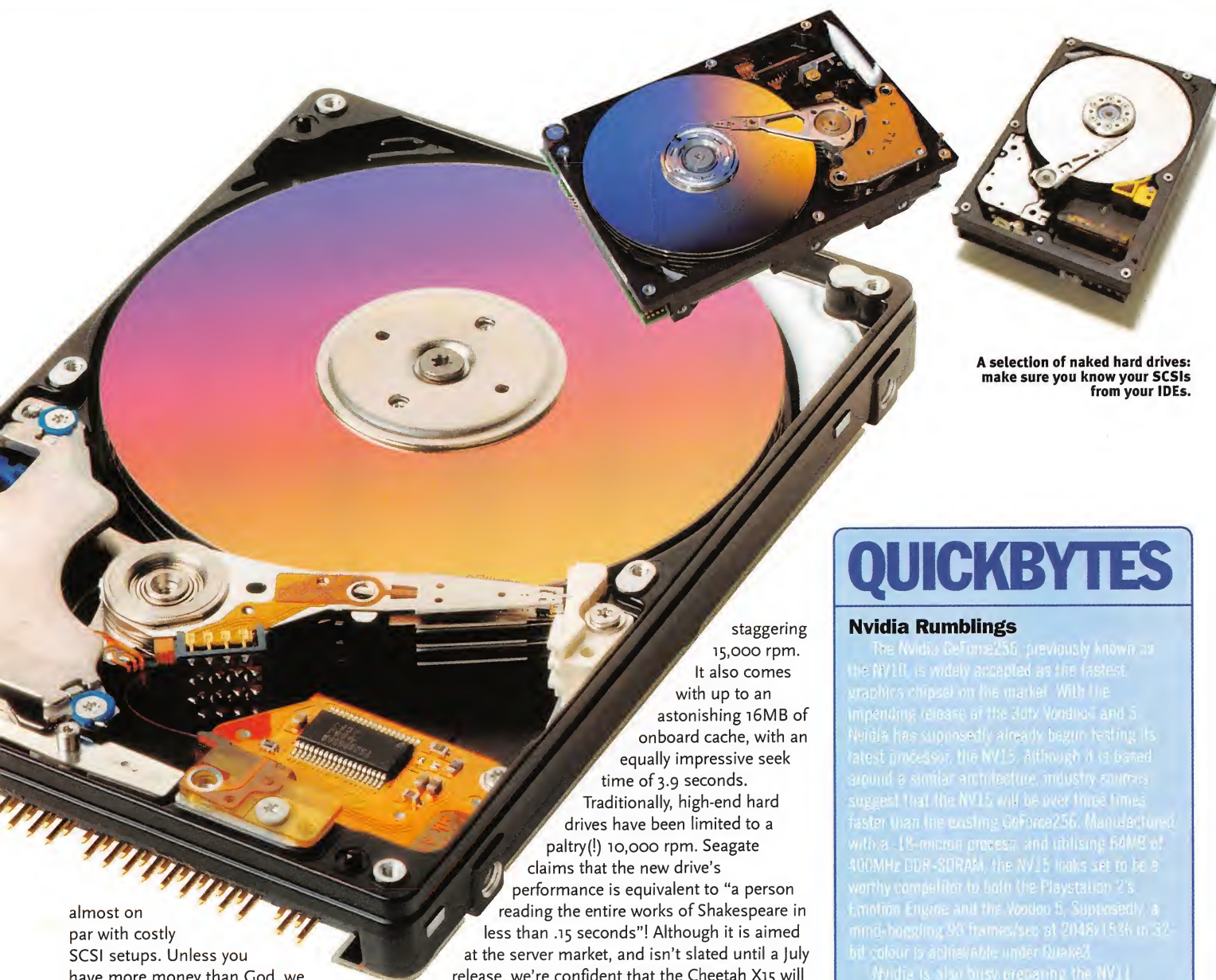
Access Time

The interval between the time a request for data is made by the system and the time the data is available from the drive. Measured in milliseconds.

Controller

The chip that translates computer data and commands into a form suitable for use by the hard drive.





A selection of naked hard drives: make sure you know your SCSIs from your IDEs.

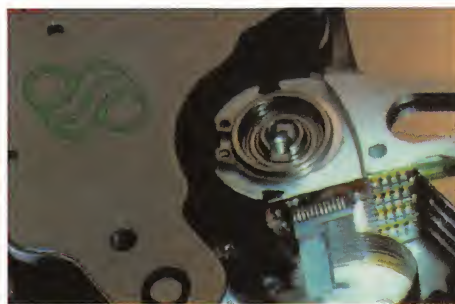
almost on par with costly SCSI setups. Unless you have more money than God, we suggest most gamers stick with IDE.

The Future

Hard disk technology is rapidly evolving: For instance, Seagate Technology has just announced the world's fastest hard drive, the Cheetah X15. The Cheetah operates at a

staggering 15,000 rpm. It also comes with up to an astonishing 16MB of onboard cache, with an equally impressive seek time of 3.9 seconds.

Traditionally, high-end hard drives have been limited to a paltry(!) 10,000 rpm. Seagate claims that the new drive's performance is equivalent to "a person reading the entire works of Shakespeare in less than .15 seconds"! Although it is aimed at the server market, and isn't slated until a July release, we're confident that the Cheetah X15 will find its way into the PCPowerPlay beast rig!



Seagate's Cheetah: the new X15 model is reputedly the world's fastest hard drive.

QUICKBYTES

Nvidia Rumblings

The Nvidia GeForce256, previously known as the NV10, is widely accepted as the fastest graphics chipset on the market. With the impending release of the Joty Voodoo3 and 5, Nvidia has supposedly already begun testing its latest processor, the NV15. Although it is based around a similar architecture, industry sources suggest that the NV15 will be over three times faster than the existing GeForce256. Manufactured with a .18-micron process and utilising 64MB of 400MHz DDR-SDRAM, the NV15 looks set to be a worthy competitor to both the Playstation 2's Emotion Engine and the Voodoo 5. Supposedly, a mind-boggling 90 frames/sec at 2048x1536 in 32-bit colour is achievable under Quake3.

Nvidia is also busy preparing the NV11 chipset, aimed at budget users and large-computer manufacturers. Featuring standard 166mhz SDRAM, the NV11 will be at least one and a half times as fast as the current GeForce256. We can't wait!

Cyrix III

The discerning gamer has always ignored Cyrix products: inferior performance and a general lack of compatibility has been the major problem. The Cyrix III, its latest offering, looks set to continue this dispiriting pattern. Even the rather lowly AMD K5-3 and Intel Celeron microprocessors outperform the Cyrix III at similar clock speeds, leaving it well out of the league of the Pentium III and Athlon. Sadly, Cyrix's troubles seem only set to continue.

HotLinks

www.storagereview.com
Hard Drive Comparisons

www.3dsoundsurge.com
Cutting-Edge SoundCard/Speaker Reviews

www.thetechzone.com
Technical Analysis of Upcoming Hardware

GETTING THE BEST FROM PC DVD-ROM

WATCH MOVIES ON YOUR PC? IT'S AS EASY AS DVD, ACCORDING TO **ELTON CANE**

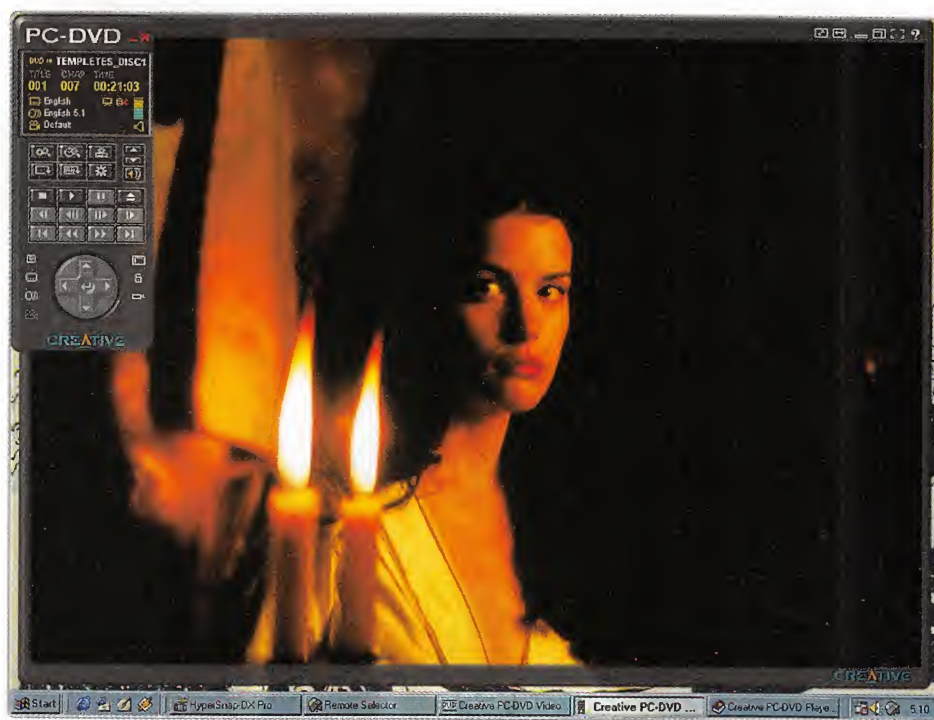
Since about 1997 many PCs have come equipped with DVD-ROM drives, and while this was initially done to deal with games on the DVD format, there has been a distinct lack of games developers releasing titles on the format, despite the increased storage space it affords.

Now DVD video has become the main focus of DVD-ROM drives. While many AV fanatics might balk at the thought of viewing movies on their home computer, when set up right a PC can offer a quality movie watching experience.

Components

There are three main components in a DVD video set up on the PC: the drive, the decoder, which is either a hardware card or a software engine, and the software player. There are a huge number of DVD-ROM drives on the market, and all of them are capable of reading DVD, CD Audio, CD-R, CD-RW, VCD etc. But the most important thing to look out for is that the drive itself is region free. There are firmware updates available on the Net to override the region lock on certain drives (see Links), but it's best to just start with a region free drive. Especially avoid brand new fourth generation drives that have region locks because you might have to wait a while for firmware updates to appear, if they do at all.

To get the best performance out of your PC DVD system it's a good idea to get a dedicated MPEG-2 decoder card. Sometimes a new PC that has a DVD-ROM drive will come with one of these installed, but generally you'll have to get one yourself. These cards slot into a PCI expansion slot just like a 3D graphics or sound card and they take the burden of decoding the DVD away from the CPU. They also come with TV and audio outs for integration with the rest of your entertainment system. Cards like the REALmagic Hollywood+ and Creative



Candles? For me? Oh, Liv, you shouldn't have...

Dxr2 and Dxr3, all offer performance equal to a stand-alone player.

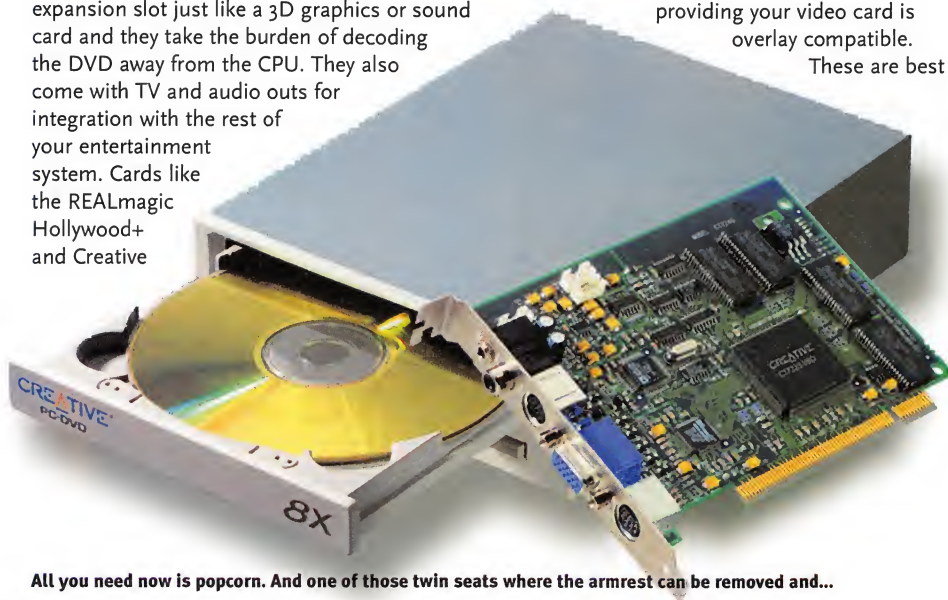
To play DVD videos with a decoder card you'll have to stick with the software player that came with it, because these were specifically designed to get the optimum performance from the card. If you have a good fast CPU (400Mhz and up) then you can get reasonable results with a software decoder and player, providing your video card is overlay compatible.

These are best

for watching DVD video on the PC's monitor, because even if your video card has a TV output the quality is unlikely to be very good. Using a software decoder/player you'll also be limited to whatever sound format your sound card supports (usually Dolby Pro Logic at best, although some of the newer ones support Dolby Digital). The advantage of the software decoder/player is that any recently bought PC with a DVD-ROM drive can play DVD videos without too much messing around. The best software decoder/players available are Cinemaster, PowerDVD, WinDVD and Xing DVD, but some incompatibilities with drives and video cards exists, so it's best to try a few of these to see which ones work best with your system.

Let them be free!

There are various programs that can override region settings on both hardware and software decoders. One of the best for hardware decoders is Remote Selector, a shareware title that not only allows unlimited region switching, but also offers support for infra-red remote control devices that connect to the back of your PC. It works with the most popular MPEG-2 decoder cards and also the Cinemaster software decoder. For any other models you might have to surf the Net for



All you need now is popcorn. And one of those twin seats where the armrest can be removed and...



Just point and click. And click.

patches (again, see Links).

There are various other utility programs and patches that can be used to free up your DVD system, but one thing to look for is whether or not you're able to disable Macrovision protection. This is especially important if you want to connect out from your decoder card or standard video card to a VCR rather than direct to a television.

When the DVD format was being finalised the big Hollywood studios, for obvious reasons, wanted some kind of protection that stopped DVDs being dubbed to analogue videotapes. What they came up with was the Macrovision circuit, which sends pulse and colour distortion signals to composite and S-video outputs that affects VCR circuitry in such a way as to render the picture virtually illegible. The circuit can be easily bypassed by many utilities and this offers more flexibility in how you connect your PC DVD to your other AV equipment.

"THERE ARE VARIOUS PROGRAMS THAT CAN OVERRIDE REGION SETTINGS..."

Configuration

Now that you've rid your system of all those nasty protection devices it's time to set it all up for optimum performance. Of course how you do this will depend on exactly what hardware and software you've got.

For displaying through the monitor you'll need a loop-back cable that usually comes supplied with the decoder card. Run this cable from the video card into the decoder card and then connect the monitor directly to the VGA output on the decoder card. The decoder card will now use its own overlay controller, rather than the video card's (if it has one), to display the picture on your monitor.

Now for the sound, where there are many more options available. Most decoder cards come with an S/P-DIF output for connection to a Dolby Digital amplifier. Dolby Digital 5.1 is the quality standard for DVDs at the moment and it uses 6 discrete digital sound channels for an incredible home theatre experience.

For those not lucky enough to have a Dolby Digital amplifier it's possible to attach a regular stereo amp via the 3.5mm stereo output, or you can connect the decoder card to the sound card. Depending on the type of card this can be done externally with a 3.5mm stereo loop cable, or internally via a connector on the edge of the card.

When using the sound card for audio out from DVD you are, of course, limited to the capabilities of the sound card. The same applies for anyone using a software decoder/player; how you arrange your set up will depend on the capabilities of your sound card and video card.

That's it?

It might seem a bit complicated at first, but for anyone who's already got a DVD ROM drive on their PC setting it up as a quality DVD video machine can be a lot cheaper than buying a stand-alone player, especially considering that disabling region and Macrovision protection can be done for nothing. Once you've got it all set up all that remains is to grab a copy of your favourite movie on DVD, boot up the computer, sit back and enjoy.



That wasn't too scary, was it?

LINKS

DVD-ROM DRIVES

All the major computer electronics manufacturers, Sony, Pioneer, Panasonic, Creative etc have corporate websites where you can find out about particular DVD-ROM drives. Alternatively there's a big list of common drives and their specifications at: <http://www.visualdomain.net/drives>

MPEG-2 DECODER CARDS

Hollywood+

www.sigmadesigns.com/

Creative Dxr2/Dxr3

www.soundblaster.com/pc-dvd/encore-6x/

PLAYERS AND UTILITIES

Remote Selector

www.visualdomain.net

Zone Selector

<http://altern.org/zoneselector/uk.htm>

DVD Genie

www.inmatrix.com

Power DVD

www.geocities.com/Colosseum/Rink/9429/

WinDVD

www.multimania.com/region0main/downl_iwi.htm

Cinemaster DVD Player

www.dvdtutis.com/dl_cinemaster.htm

XingDVD

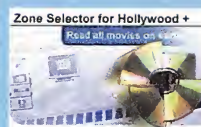
www.geocities.com/Area51/Meteor/5657/index.html

GENERAL LINKS

www.dvdtutis.com/

www.multimania.com/region0main/

www.dvdsoft.de/



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content with that?"***

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and more.**



more content

MUSIC

SCREEN

MICROSOFT IntelliMouse Optical

RRP: \$79.95 **DISTRIBUTOR:** MICROSOFT (02) 9870 2368

The IntelliMouse Optical is being pitched primarily as an ambidextrous mouse featuring Microsoft's optical tracking technology (the one that causes the undercarriage of the unit to glow that piercing red). To be true, the mouse won't prove a bane to left-handed mouse users and is a joy to behold for the right-handers as well.

However, it is its smaller size that has brought the most joy to us here at PCPP. The smaller profile of the IntelliMouse is a welcome change, being far more comfortable than the previous model. Those put off by the original IntelliMouse's cumbersome size would do well to give the Optical a test drive.

Given the more symmetrical design of the Optical, Microsoft repositioned the 'thumb' buttons to sit one each on either side of the unit. No matter anyway, as we found these buttons hardly ever engaged anyway.

Otherwise, this unit is identical to the larger IntelliMouse model - though they still haven't fixed the USB port installation problems.



Small and light - just the way any good gaming mouse should be.

MICROSOFT Internet Keyboard Pro

RRP: \$89.95 **DISTRIBUTOR:** MICROSOFT (02) 9870 2368

It's not often that you get excited about basic hardware component, but when you do - oh buggerit. This Hotware review is going to steer well clear from words like 'curvaceous', 'smooth' and terms like 'gentle to the touch'. Yes, these words do apply - this is a keyboard review, after all - however there's more to the Internet Keyboard Pro than its ergonomic and sturdy design, and pleasant feel.

What brought a smile to our joyful collective face's was the inclusion of highly functional shortcut keys (19 in all) situated along the top of the board, just above the function keys and the numeric keypad. Divided into three main sections - Browser/Internet, Multimedia and My Computer - these shortcut keys bring a selection of the main mouse-driven commands

of your computer within a press of your fingers on the keyboard.

Whilst the Browser-based buttons seemed a little pointless (when surfing, we found it much easier to continue using the mouse to navigate), the email client and speaker volume buttons were absolutely invaluable. The three buttons situated above the numeric keypad includes 'suspend' (another handy shortcut that powers down the computer to an energy saving state in a hurry). Microsoft has also allowed Pro users to customise these keys for any program or GUI shortcut they

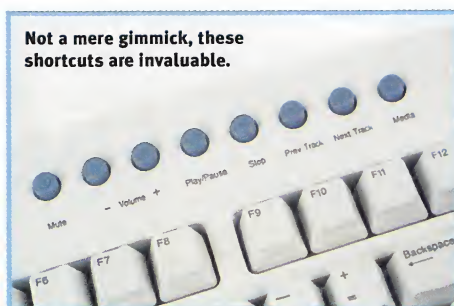


desire, through the use of the included IntelliType software.

But what really kept that smile on our mugs was the inclusion of dual USB ports at the back of the board - a much better prospect when using high-traffic USB devices than having to muck about at the back of CPU case. Ingenious.

Microsoft have also released shortcut versions of the Natural Keyboard and a scaled down version of the Internet Pro, with only nine shortcut buttons.

The Natural Keyboard Pro retails at \$119, while the Internet Keyboard retails at \$59.95.



Not a mere gimmick, these shortcuts are invaluable.



The USB ports - perfect for high traffic peripherals like scanners and joysticks.

XITEL Force Feedback Headphones

RRP: \$59.95 **DISTRIBUTOR:** XITEL (02) 6241 0050

I'll say this from the get go. If you have your computer in any communal area - an office, living room or train compartment - headphones are a must. Sound plays such an important role in games these days that any loss of quality is a loss for your ability to perform. That said, the ForceFeedback Headphones are a decent unit, with a weird little gimmick. Said to offer 'totally immersive virtual reality gameplay' they don't quite deliver, due in the main to their major selling point.

A small battery pack is standard with the headphones, which also has controls for the vibration control and the separate bass level control. The built in power amplifier is a bonus, especially for those who attended a few too many rock gigs in their youth! The design is comfortable, but the results aren't so encouraging. The Force Feedback - whilst good in theory - does not translate quite so well in practice. This is because the in-game music appears to make the headphones confused in their feedback - leading to a slight buzzing. However, if you are dealing

The perfect way to disappear into your own personal, vibrating world.



with pure effects, the sound is fantastic. Walking over power-ups, opening doors, revving the engine - it all takes on a life of its own. The surround effects and the mild jolting of the feedback really adds to your gaming. Also, the option is there to disable the force feedback if you

want to relax and listen to music. If you do, you could well find that Xitel's headphones are everything you are looking for.

GUILLEMOT Force Feedback Racing Wheel

RRP: \$249 **DISTRIBUTOR:** UBISOFT (02) 9362 1414

When you're designing and manufacturing top-of-the-line sports cars - obscenely sexy vehicles that blur the lines between fantasy and reality, man and machine (*that's enough now* - Ed.) - you've got to wonder: what does a computer peripheral license really mean to you? Without a doubt, any manufacturer could sell truckloads of paper mache balloons if they had the Ferrari logo on 'em. So do you exploit the license, or work with it?

With the Ferrari-licensed Force Feedback Racing Wheel, Guillemot have gone well beyond simply badging a product with a great name (there's no way you can escape the Prancing Horse smack-bam in the middle of the wheel) and produced a racing peripheral that exudes class. It is clear that the arrangement between the two companies wasn't simply a couple of phone calls and a collection of the appropriate logos - the Ferrari wheel bears the hallmarks of great steering wheel design. So Ferrari's name remains intact and Guillemot has one of the best racing wheels on the market.

It just feels so right. The rubber-grip finish isn't as scintillating as a full leather one, obviously, though is more than adequate. Most obvious is the attention paid to ergonomics - all of the buttons and levers are within easy reach



and are comfortable to use. The only cause for concern here could be the two sets of gearshift levers behind the wheel. The upper set feel a little too "sticky" and unresponsive, whilst the lower feel far more pleasing and pliable. Thankfully, with the programming software included, you can reverse their function.

Even the pedal unit has been lavished with attention - those ridges reduce shoe slippage.

Most satisfactory (alright, we admit it, we gushed for longer than we should have) are the two thumb rests situated on either side of the centre of the wheel. Pure comfort.

The unit itself is solid (with the force feedback motor, it weighs in at just under 2 kgs), with two large screws and an central clamp to ensure the unit remains firmly in place. The pedals are larger than most, although unfortunately, their overhang prevents the box being placed against a wall.

Overall, a fantastic steering wheel which does its license an immense amount of justice.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SETUP



DANIEL RUTTER UNRAVELS THE GREAT MYSTERY THAT IS PC TECHNOLOGY.

WRITE TO:

Setup
PC PowerPlay
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Strawberry Hills
NSW 2016
setup@pcpowerplay.next.com.au

When you write remember to include as much pertinent information as possible. Send your CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT and any associated *.INI files for Windows that might tell me more about your problem. Give me as detailed an explanation as you can and be sure to include as much detail as possible about your PC. Feel free to email your questions or, if you want to snail mail, please remember to write clearly or better still print your letters. Please note that due to the volume of messages we receive, we cannot guarantee a response to your queries.

TECH TIPS

MEA CULPA

The conspiracy between McDonalds and the Norwegian Secret Service to beam incorrect thoughts into my head caused me, in the February column, to say that 10/100BaseT network cables terminated in an "RJ-58" connector. RJ-58 is, of course, the standard for 10Base2 coaxial network CABLE, not a connector standard at all. I should have said "RJ-45". Now excuse me, I have to go and wrap more tinfoil around my head. Oh, sure, you laugh now, but you'll be sorry when the Plan is complete and you all have nothing to eat but lutefisk burgers.

TO 100MB OR NOT TO 100MB

Q> If I have two computers, both with an Intel 10/100 Ethernet card installed, can I have a 100Mb network over them red crossover cables? Or do I need a 100Mb hub?

Jack Banh, Email

A> 100BaseT works fine over a crossover cable (which, incidentally, can come in any colour). And, as with 10BaseT over crossover, you can turn on duplex mode as well if both network cards support it, allowing full speed both ways at once. This won't actually make any perceptible difference for most network operations, but it's nice to know it's there!

ARIBA! ARIBA!

Q> Hi, Great mag. Just a quick question. Is a serial mouse with a PS/2 adaptor connected to a PS/2 port as fast as a normal serial mouse? Thanks.

Scott G, Email

A> Faster, actually. PC serial mice update the pointer location only 33 times per second, but most PS/2 mice work at about twice that rate. And you can wind them up further using a utility like PS2Rate (which you can find on CD PowerPlay).

STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Q> Hey every one at PC power play question of the 2day is about uninstalling deleted game files. Iv recently purchased a copy of half-life and I'm Trying 2 enjoy 2 the full extent but my ping is enormously huge and my parents (computer freaks) say that's it's the cache and iv installed so many Games that the computer a bit slow and I cant uninstall them because iv deleted them and the computer wont uninstall and I am stuck with games I don't want So that's MI question is there an answer..... And is there

an solution and not 2 buy any software or reinstalling the hard drive

Sam Barton, Email

A> (Deep breath...) Assuming you've got a 56K modem there's not a lot you can do to reduce your ping time other than carefully choosing the servers you play on you will find that servers hosted here in Australia are much snappier than those hosted overseas but even then you're likely to find pure twitch games like deathmatch Quake III a pretty unsatisfying experience you'll probably have more fun in a more strategic game like the most excellent Counter-Strike mod for Half-Life (<http://www.counter-strike.net/>).

If you delete a game's whole directory that's just as good as uninstalling it properly as far as getting back hard disk space goes uninstalling it properly is more tidy but makes no difference to how fast your computer runs you'll just end up with Start Menu entries that point to games you don't have any more if on the other hand your computer really is running slowly and Windows is misbehaving then uninstalling games and applications won't help you it's time to reinstall Windows.

Phew.

OVERCLOCK WOES

Q> I have an Intel Celeron Processor running at 333MHz and I would like to overclock it. The problem is, it won't!

First of all, I set the FSB at 100MHz, which made the processor run at a speed of 500MHz. I thought that it would do fine, but it kept freezing up - I believe a Celeron can't run at a FSB of 100MHz - is that true?

Anyway, so I went back to a 66MHz front side bus and set the DIP switch ratio to 5.5x to get 366MHz. I started up and was greeted by a blank screen and a series of beeping noises. Then I decided to set the FSB back to 100MHz and set the frequency to 4x to get 400MHz. When I started up

the computer, the speed was 500MHz even though I changed the DIP settings!

I gave it one more try and swapped back to a 66MHz FSB and set the Freq. to 6x. When I started up, the speed was 333MHz, nothing had changed! The only way I can speed up my computer is to set the FSB to 100MHz but it freezes to frequently and heats up too quickly. I thought Celerons were made for overclocking, so please tell me if I am doing anything wrong or if my processor just can't hack overclocking.

Marc Fumberger, Email

A> Many slower Celerons, including 333s, will tolerate a 100MHz FSB. This turns a C-300 into a 450, a 333 into a 500 and a 366 into a 550, IF the CPU core can handle the higher speed with its supply voltage at the stock setting. Some can, some can't, and it depends to some extent on the motherboard, as well.

Changing the multiplier should never make any difference, because Celerons, like all recent Intel processors, have a locked multiplier; they ignore the motherboard multiplier setting.

The usual strategy to get some extra speed out of borderline Celerons is to CAREFULLY wind up the CPU core voltage setting. Increasing the core voltage by 0.1 or maybe 0.2 volts often does the trick, at the price of making the processor run rather warmer. It sounds as if your CPU could be running too hot already; a CPU that works for a few minutes and then hangs is a classic symptom of thermal problems. Better case ventilation and a big fat CPU cooler may help. Your motherboard has to support CPU voltage tweaking for this to be any use, though; many don't.

You can also use less adventurous FSB settings - many motherboards support the non-standard 75MHz and 83MHz FSB speeds, and pretty much anything will run OK at 75MHz. Then again, that's only 9/8ths of your previous speed, so it's not a great achievement.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

SOBBING VIOLINS

Q> Greetings, oh Yoda of Tech wisdom (or whatever you call yourself these days).

I have been reading some old letters and I just wanted to ask you some questions (well that was actually immediately apparent 'cause that's what you are for) *[You don't even treat me like a real person! I hate you! I hate you! - Dan]* But, on to the questions:

1: I saw the phrase "overclock" used quite a few times so I just wanted to know how? How do you overclock a CPU and how far should I overclock it (I have a P2 300, 32MB SDRAM 32X CDROM, and that's basically all I know).

2: Refresh rate. In PCPP #41 Setup letter of the month you said you could change it. How?

3: Modems. we all have problems with them (err.. or is it just me?) well mine is a 56K modem and it's only connecting at 32-36K; any help would certainly be appreciated.

PS: Could you please E-MAIL a reply because <unfortunately> I have only a small amount of pocket money (2\$NZ) and can only afford PCPP once a month or so :)

**Peter O'Shannessy
New Zealand**

A> Oh, man. \$NZ2.00. What is that, about 25 US cents? All right you pathetic little urchin, have the Letter Of The Month prize.

Getting to your questions:

1: Overclocking is somewhat complicated. To do it with a PII you need a motherboard with the right features - some Celerons can just be wound up rather a lot on any motherboard that lets you manually set the Front Side Bus (FSB) speed (see the Overclock Woes letter elsewhere in this month's Setup), but for everything else you need non-standard FSB

settings and, preferably, CPU voltage control as well. Your motherboard may have these features, or it may not. If you're an absolute beginner, poking around inside your PC will PROBABLY not cause anything awful to happen, but it COULD.

2: Changing refresh rate is, usually, easy. Go to Display Properties from Control Panel (or just right-click an empty bit of desktop and select Properties from the menu), and go to Settings -> Advanced -> Adapter. If you change the refresh rate setting to "Optimal", Windows will automatically pick the fastest refresh rate it thinks is supported by both your display adapter and your monitor. If Windows doesn't know what kind of monitor you have, or thinks your monitor can't handle refresh rates as high as it actually can, you'll need to change the monitor by going to the Monitor tab in the advanced properties window and clicking Change. If you change the monitor, you won't actually be able to use the new refresh rates until you restart the computer, although Windows won't tell you that. Any refresh rate above 72Hz should look pretty much flicker free, although 85Hz is a better target.

3: How fast a "56K" modem connects depends on what it's connecting to, and how good the phone line is. On a good phone line, 44K or 48K connections are common; actual 56K connections are not. If your phone lines are crummy, you'll get crummy modem speed,



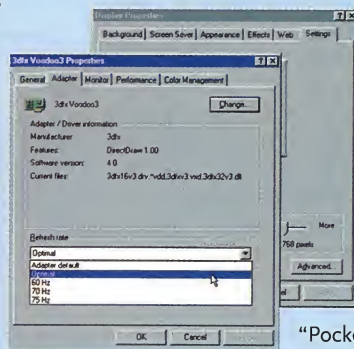
LETTER OF THE MONTH WINS THE MOST EXCELLENT SIDEWINDER AND DUAL STRIKE CONTROL PADS FROM MICROSOFT'S PREMIERE RANGE OF GAME CONTROLLERS. CHEERS MICROSOFT!

and there's nothing you can do about it. Also, if you connect to another ordinary modem - as opposed to the special modems used by ISPs -

you'll only get a 31200 bit per second link, at most. 31200 is also the fastest UPSTREAM speed you'll ever see from a "56K" modem, as their higher speed only applies for data coming from the ISP to you.

Oh, and just a note to all of you letter-writers who even now are stampeding to be first to send me a better hard luck story than Peter's: Forget it. All

"Pocket money? I DREAM of getting pocket money! My parents give me two empty Coke cans to reclaim for the recycling money every six months and I have to flatten the cans myself with a teaspoon!" letters will from now on be received with a hearty "Well, it sure sucks to be you!"



There are other things that could be wrong, as well. You might not be using PC100-rated RAM, which you need for 100MHz FSB. Or you might have left your AGP and PCI dividers set so you're overclocking those buses as well as the CPU - many motherboards change the dividers automatically when you change the FSB, but if yours doesn't then to use 100MHz FSB you need to set AGP, if you have it, to 2/3 and PCI to 1/3.

FIRE ALARM?

Q> I just bought a new Abit BX6 rev 2.0 M/B and a Celeron 433 and I have overclocked to 488MHz no hassles. I have flashed the latest BIOS. What is annoying is after a while it gets over 40 degrees Celsius and a beeper goes off. I have a CPU heatsink/fan. What is a good temperature to be running at? Is it safe to run it at 40 degrees Celsius?

Darren Presti, Email

A> Provided you're using that Celeron on a Socket-370-to-Slot-1 adaptor that passes through the signal from its integrated thermal diode, then the temperature you're reading for the CPU actually IS its core temperature. People using older processors with no diode, or using motherboards that can't monitor the diode signal, or using the right processor and the right motherboard but an adaptor board that doesn't pass the diode signal through, have all sorts of trouble figuring out what temperature their CPU is really at. Various temperature probe designs - sticky probes that attach to processor heatsinks, probes that live on the motherboard under a socketed CPU - can only tell you how hot the probe is; since the probe isn't in the processor core, you don't get much of an idea how hot the CPU itself is.

To my knowledge, the default CPU core alarm temperature for the BF6 is

70 degrees Centigrade, and the default ay-caramba automatic shutdown temperature is 75 degrees. Maybe different BIOS versions have different values; maybe you changed the setting yourself. In any case, you can change it back by going into the BIOS setup and tweaking the alarm

READER'S TECH TIPS

DIAL-UP SQUELCHING

From someone who revels in the name of "Thrillhouse":

If you're having a problem with games such as Half-Life trying to dial your Internet provider when you want to play a LAN game, try this:

1. Go to the Control Panel and double click on the Internet Options Icon
2. Click on the Connections Tab
3. Click on the Radio button marked "Never dial a connection" and click on OK

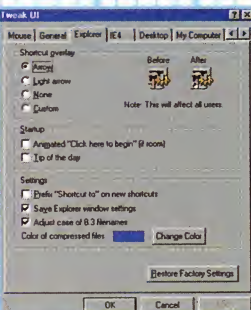
Ta-da! No more annoying dial-up prompts :)

[Well, almost. There are actually TWO bits of Windows that'll give you stupid dial-up windows when you don't want them. This is one of 'em. To get to the other one, open My Computer -> Dial-Up Networking, go to the Connections menu and select the Settings option. Now select the "Don't prompt to use Dial-Up Networking" radio button and click OK. - Dan]

READER'S TECH TIPS

ARROW ANNIHILATION

An entity known as **Kroony** asked us how to get rid of that "little annoying arrow" in Windows shortcuts; it's easy. Install TweakUI (in the tools / reskit / powertoy directory on the Windows 98 CD, or at <http://www.microsoft.com/windows95/downloads/contents/wutoys/w95pwrttoys/default.asp> if you want the Win95 version). TweakUI has one of those daft installers that can't



remember where it's being installed from and has to be told again, but once you've done that, you'll have a new TweakUI option in Control Panel. TweakUI can change all sorts of Windows behaviour, including getting rid of the little arrows and the "Shortcut to" prefix for shortcuts.

temperature back up to 70 degrees or so. These temperatures are pretty realistic; it's actually quite hard to blow up your CPU thermally, since they just stop working before they get hot enough to be permanently damaged, but being told when your CPU is getting hot enough to crash your computer is still a nice feature.

40 degrees is nothing to worry about, especially in an Australian summer.

KEYBOARD CONUNDRUM

Q> I just upgraded most of my computer, and part of that upgrade was a brand new PS/2 keyboard. I thought that a PS/2 keyboard would be better than a serial keyboard, however when I am playing games I can only press 2 keys at a time. This is very annoying especially in Tomb Raider when I end up sprinting but not being able to turn in either direction!

Is there a setting in the BIOS or something that I can change to fix this or do I just have a crap keyboard?

Eloise, Email

A> PS/2 and conventional "AT" keyboards actually differ only in the physical plug; they send the same signals to the computer, it's just that PS/2 ones do it through a smaller socket. This is why AT-to-PS/2 and PS/2-to-AT keyboard adapters work on any keyboard; all they do is change the plug shape. Serial-to-PS/2 mouse adapters, on the other hand, only work with those mice able to comprehend the two, actually different, standards. There's no such thing as a "serial keyboard", although there ARE Universal Serial Bus (USB) keyboards.

Your problem is, as you surmised, that you have a crap keyboard. The electronics inside a keyboard can vary in quality, and cheap and nasty 'boards have cut price innards that can only send a few keypress signals at once - in your case, only two.

CHANGING YOUR NAME

Q> I just got back from East Timor and with all of my hard-earned cash bought a new PIII600/GeForce system. Anyway the shop installed Win98SE and when they registered it or whatever made my name Roger (Sorry to any Roger's

out there but it is a sucky name and I hate it). Now whenever I install any MS software it keeps trying to call me Roger. Short of reinstalling the OS, is there any way to fix the problem?

Jason Logue, Email

A> Don't worry, you'll be reinstalling Windows soon enough!

If you can't wait that long, though, run the Registry Editor (Start -> Run and type "regedit") and go to HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion in the left panel. Now, in the right panel, change the values for the RegisteredOrganization and RegisteredOwner keys to whatever suits your fancy. Or use RegEdit and so a "Search" for the current registered owner/org.

ADVANCED RAMMING

Q> Most advanced Windows users know that Windows 9x doesn't allow you to use any RAM over 128MB. However whilst doing some tweaking (Start -> Run -> msconfig) in the advanced settings under the "general" tab there is a option to "Limit memory to X MB". I'm thinking about upgrading to 256MB sometime soon and I was wondering if this will allow me to have the extra 128MB being used without having to upgrade to Win NT 4/5? Also, whilst I'm not buying the

memory for games, I'm wondering how great the performance would be in games? Would I be better off with a TNT 2 (my system is a AMD K6-2 300MHz, 128MB RAM, 16MB Guillemot Banshee)?

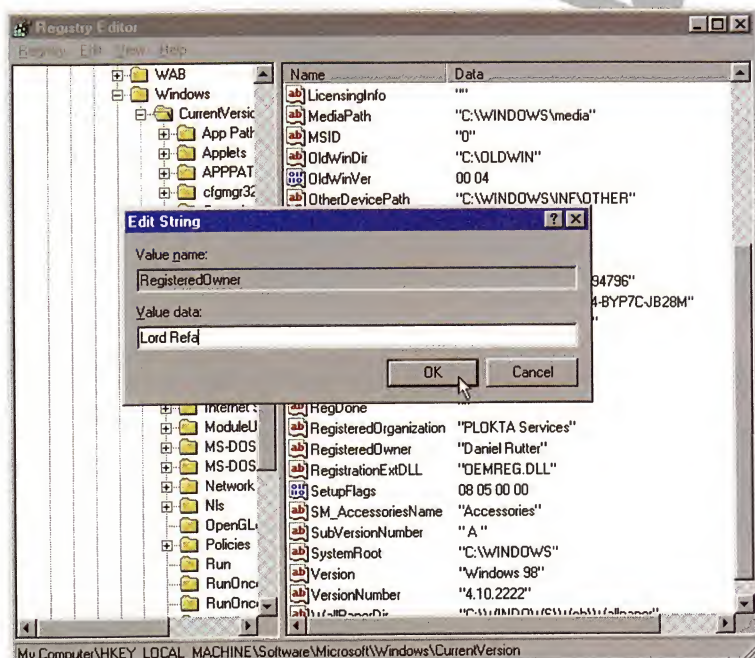
Protozone

A> Uh, pardon? You must have been talking to some much more "advanced" Windows users than we've ever met, because all of our more-than-128MB Win9x machines are chugging along just fine, thank you.

Windows 95/98 can address up to 4GB of RAM, the limit of the 32 bit memory bus. But you can't pack that much into an ordinary PC. With 256MB modules the largest you can buy, and no more than four RAM slots on most motherboards, 1Gb is the current (rather expensive) ceiling for most PCs. Even that much may not be possible, depending on how happy your BIOS is with the big RAM modules.

You won't see as MUCH improvement from 256Mb over 128Mb as you see from 128Mb over 64Mb, but Windows most definitely WILL use the RAM, and will be glad of it.

For games, more than 128Mb is overkill. It CAN make a small difference to load times in some games, but not enough to make it worthwhile. Upgrading your graphics card would, indeed, be a better idea; your mid-speed processor would do all right with a TNT2.



The Registry Editor allows all sorts of complicated stuff - like changing your name!



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CD POWERPLAY#48

Starting CD PowerPlay

Welcome to the latest edition of CD PowerPlay. This month's cd includes some of the hottest demos from around the world. Starting off, there's the new and improved Battlezone 2 demo, plus a heap of goodies for The Sims and Unreal Tournament. On the second disc, you'll find the very best driving and racing demos around. We've also got all the latest and coolest demos we could get our hands on.

As always, navigation through the online menus is easy. Simply click on the category you want and then select the game or utility. We hope you enjoy this month's CD and hope to see you back next month for another dose of gaming goodness.

cdtech@powerplay.next.com.au

Faulty CDs will be replaced free of charge. Send it, together with a description of the error, to:

PC PowerPlay CD Returns

Reply Paid 634

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PATCHES

Planescape: Torment v1.1 Patch

Changes from Version 1.0 and Beta 1.1

Below is a list of some of the major fixes made to Torment in this patch. Many other minor problems were fixed as well.

- A number of changes have been made in order to fix the slowdown problems that have been occurring. A broken resource servicing loop has been fixed. An optimization has been made to rectangle calculations for floater messages to avoid doing it more often than necessary. Finally, the capturing and releasing of resource shares in the AI thread have been optimized.
- The disc swapping bug between CD2 and CD3 (and potentially others as well) has been fixed. You should not be asked to provide more than one CD during area transitions.
- After level 20, fighter's Attacks Per Round will no longer drop to 1.
- The bug where a blank dialog box would pop up when trying to advance levels has been fixed.
- A cutscene firing problem when first entering the Dead Nations has been fixed.
- Numerous items that were improperly being sold for 1cp have had their prices modified.
- Numerous infinite experience and/or copper bugs were fixed.
- Numerous spells have been fixed in their interactions with cutscenes as well as player death and resurrection.
- A number of stats rolling over to 0 have been fixed.
- Lockup when leaving Ravel's Maze through portal should be fixed.
- Interactions between and number of spells and the Autopause function have been fixed.
- Dakkon is no longer able to equip any weapons except for his Karach Blade.
- Many spell tweaks have been made.
- Numerous bugs concerning Lothar have been fixed. He should no longer kill the player inexplicably nor disappear.

DISC 1



Developer: Activision

Category: Realtime Strategy

Need: P200, 32MB, Win95/98, 3D Card

3D: Direct 3D

Multiplayer: TCP/IP, IPX

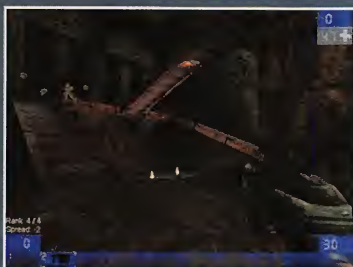
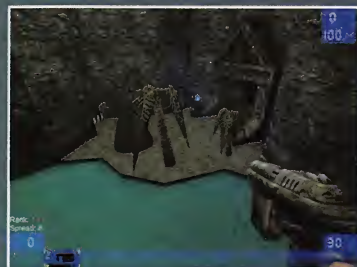
■ Jump in and take command in a fight that spans many exotic worlds and locations - from the steaming, swampy jungles crawling with deadly creatures to rocky wastelands strewn with boiling lava pits. Players start by building a base from which they command a force of armoured vehicles, infantry, and aircraft through a series of exploratory, offensive and defensive missions.

Drive a variety of tanks and walkers, pilot the scout ships, and even jump out and fight an evil and challenging alien enemy on foot. Each side has an arsenal of powerful weapons including guided missiles, mortars, mines and bazookas.

ADD-ON SPECIAL

- Huge collection of **The Sims** skins, textures, sounds, and face editors.
- **Rogue Squadron** tool kit
- New **Starfleet Command** bonus missions, including exclusive Hydran and Romulan missions for this strategy gem.
- **UT Bonus pack**

The first bonus pack has been released for Unreal Tournament - and we've got it right here. Add new character skins, bonus levels, and relics to the full version of UT and take your current gameplay tactics to new heights. It's Unreal! Plus extra maps, skins and the latest updates.



Army Men: Air Tactics

Category: Realtime Strategy

Developer: 3DO

Need: P133, 32MB, SVGA 2MB

3D: NA

Multiplayer: TCP/IP, IPX

■ Meet Captain William Blade, the finest air cavalry flier ever to take to the skies. He's tough, he's smart, and he's fearless. Blade's got the reputation for having nerves of steel and the expertise to take on an entire brigade of the enemy. His name says it all, because any enemy that gets in his way will be cut down. General Plastro, the evil leader of the Tan Army, is up to his usual war mongering. He has

enlisted the help of the Insane Grey Doctor, a maniacal genius who has created a secret force with awesome destructive powers. Army Men: Air Tactics takes combat to new heights with the introduction of the Green Air Cavalry. Captain William Blade leads his Alpha Wolf Squadron in a new series of campaigns. Along with Sarge, the familiar and courageous hero from other Army Men

games, you and Captain Blade battle in the air, on the ground, and over the seas. Rescue POWs, hunt down enemy spies, battle giant mutant insects, and sabotage the Tan Army's plan to take over the world.

Bust-A-Move 4

Category: Puzzle

Developer: Interplay

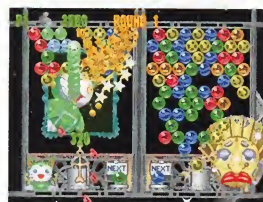
Need: P100, 32MB, SVGA

3D: N/A

Multiplayer: N/A

■ The main objective of Bust-A-Move 4 is shooting coloured bubbles into clusters of other bubbles. When a bubble makes contact with two or more bubbles of the same colour, they pop. The

object of each stage is to pop all the bubbles before the timer reaches zero or the bubbles get too low. Sound easy? That is exactly what Bob, Bub and all their new friends were hoping you would say!



Nox

Category: Action/RPG

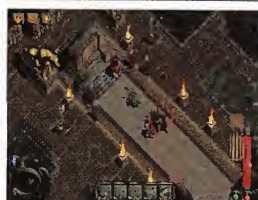
Developer: Westwood Studios

Need: P200, 32MB, SVGA

3D: N/A

Multiplayer: TCP/IP, IPX

■ Nox is a dark and creepy Action/RPG set in a bucolic world that is being corrupted by a wicked queen of the undead - Hecubah. In solo play, you choose from three different adventures. Follow the path of a warrior and you will forge your skills and master powerful weapons in the Fortress of Horrendous. Join the ranks of the conjurers in the village and learn to summon the creatures of the land and control the forces of nature. Or lead the life of a wizard, and use combat magic, stealth, and traps to foil the undead legions. This demo is multiplayer only.



PATCHES

- A problem with equipping a faction-specific weapon while in multiple factions has been fixed.
- A fix has been applied for the problem of AI turning off after application of the patch.
- A problem with swapping portraits causing loss of tooltips has been fixed.
- The problem with multiple stat bonuses not being applied that was introduced in the beta patch has been fixed (the Charisma bug).

Ultima IX: Ascension v1.18F Patch

- Fixed a crash in Valoria, involving a creeper plant.
- Fixed a plot-stopper involving the demons in Valoria.
- Fixed a plot-stopper involving Shamino's conversation.
- Fixed a crash in Wrong, involving an NPC who was attempting to go to an invalid location.
- Fixed a lockup in Wrong involving getting your backpack returned.
- Fixed a crash involving invalid music playing after a game is loaded.
- Fixed a crash involving the Jade Bracelet for sale in Paws.
- Fixed an audio problem involving the Avatar's sounds not playing in Windows 95. NOTE: If you modified your 'Options.ini' file to attempt to get these sounds playing, please revert/undo your changes. After this patch is installed, please set UseNotify=0 and Rolloff=1.0.
- Fixed a crash in the near-endgame scene involving Lord British and Blackthorn.
- Fixed a bug involving creature generators that was creating problems with collision.
- Fixed a problem on startup where the EAX environmental settings were either being set incorrectly, or preventing startup altogether.
- Made additional 3D improvements. D3D is now native to DirectX 7. Supports bilinear filtering of alpha textures in 16-bit via multipass rendering of the same texture, if that feature is supported on the given D3D hardware.
- Compressed textures are now properly supported on all platforms except nVidia's; this is a driver issue. The Savage4 card is one of the top performers as a result.
- GeForce is now supported properly.
- Screen shots in Voodoo2 SLI mode now work properly.
- Fixed numerous moderate memory leaks.
- Fixed a severe memory leak that would manifest if you open a book, then Alt-Tab away from the game.
- Lifts received a code overhaul, and now function more reliably. If the Avatar moves while on a lift, the lift halts its movement until the Avatar stands still.
- Fixed a problem with the Moonglow boat lift where you would sometimes fall through it.
- Fixed a vertical lift in Hythloth that was unreliable.
- Fixed a vertical lift in Yew; added a button at ground-level to



PATCHES

summon it.

- Fixed several inventory gold overflow crashes.
- Sometimes, starting a new game in version 1.06 (Patch #2) would not work properly; this is now fixed.
- Fixed several problems in the Spirit summoning rituals.
- Numerous bugs in the installer have been fixed. If you re-install the game with the fixed installer (available on the remastered CD), the game installs more reliably and runs more smoothly.
- The new install handles installation of DXMedia, which is required for movies to work properly.
- Suppressed humming and whistling of the Avatar, and any NPC who is in the process of dying.
- Added a LODScale value to OPTIONS.INI; scales the distance at which LODs change.
- Avatar coughing & whistling is eliminated.
- You can no longer charm the Guardian.
- If you put more than 2047 objects into a single room-sized area, the game now issues a fatal error and exits (before it would just crash).

Nocturne Patch

This version fixes problems with hardware mixing and SoundBlaster Live cards. It allows 2MB ATI 3D Expression cards to start Nocturne. This version fixes various script anomalies that could prevent Nocturne from operating correctly under unusual circumstances. An example is little Tommy will start his dialog in the church even if he has somehow gotten stuck on a pew. The ambient sound for Act 1 will now play, but only if you have done a complete install. This patch version includes a fix that allows Voodoo3 cards running the 1.03.00 drivers (or later) from 3Dfx to run at full speed with hardware acceleration. Some current saved games in Nocturne may be "invalidated" by this patch. You can load your saved game, but if Nocturne gives a warning, you SHOULD NOT use that saved game.

Wheel of Time 333 Patch

There are several new features in Version 333:

- Player ID (point your cursor at a player and see their name). It works with Disguise, too—moving your cursor over someone who is disguised will show the correct disguised name. You can turn this option off from the "Controls" menu.
- A voting system. Players can now vote to restart the server, kick an abusive player, ban an abusive player, and change a map in progress. In order for this to work, use the following syntax from the console:
vote restartserver
vote kick <player> (example: vote

Earth 2150

Category: Realtime Strategy

Developer: SSI

Need: P200, 32MB, SVGA, 3D Card

3D: Direct 3D, OpenGL

Multiplayer: N/A

■ In the sequel to Earth 2140 the use of nuclear weapons have pushed the Earth out of its normal circulation around the sun. Earth is coming closer and closer to the sun. The whole climate changes. The three "states" left on Earth (and moon) try to conquer the areas of the earth which contain the resources necessary to build a huge spaceship to escape from Earth.



Sega Swirl

Category: Puzzle

Developer: Sega

Need: P60, 16MB, SVGA

3D: N/A

Multiplayer: TCP/IP

■ Sega Swirl is an addictive puzzle game that demonstrates the Internet capacity. Sega Swirl takes a

deceptively simple idea (removing contiguous swirl game pieces of the same colour) and applies it to five distinct game modes, each with its own fun gameplay dynamic. One of the most exciting modes is the "Email Challenge," which allows you to send moves of Sega Swirl to



friends through the Dreamcast's modem feature. But the most addictive part is the "Split Screen Challenge," where you get to compete realtime against your friends.



Pro Pinball: FANTASTIC JOURNEY

Category: Pinball Sim

Developer: Empire Interactive

Need: P90, 16MB, SVGA

3D: N/A

Multiplayer: N/A

■ Travel back to eccentric Victorian times in the latest and greatest Pro Pinball adventure ever. With five steam-powered adventures, use your flippers to tunnel to the centre of the Earth, journey to the depths of the sea, fly through the tallest mountains and speed to a mysterious island to stop the evil General Yagov! Marvel at the most accurate pinball physics ever devised! Includes balls that really spin, slide, roll and jump! Gasp in awe at the complexity of the table design, featuring bumpers, ramps, drop targets, magnets and more! Be amazed at the incredible detail and constantly changing piston-powered table!

Star Wars: Pit Droids

Category: Board/Puzzle

Developer: Lucas Arts

Need: P166, 32MB, SVGA, 3D Card

3D: Direct 3D

Multiplayer: TCP/IP

■ Players direct the Pit Droids through eight locations on Tatooine. The player must guide them from the Transport Ship through Watto's Shop and Junkyard, the sweltering deserts of Hutt Flats, the mazes of the Mos Espa marketplace, and the Podrace Arena. The game includes challenges of over 300 puzzles with three settings of difficulty. The full version of the game also includes a Puzzle Maker feature to create your own Pit Droids puzzles. Puzzle builders can stage their creations in any of the featured Tatooine locations, and

Disc 1 Patches

Age Of Wonders
Close Combat
Flight Simulator 2000
Freespace 2
Homeworld
Indiana Jones
Nocturne
Planescape Torment
Q3 Point Release
Septerra Core
Soul Reaver
SWAT 3
Tomb Raider- Last Revelation
Ultima IX
Unreal Tournament 405b
Wheel Of Time

Movies

Rolling demos of
Crimson Skies
Rune
Theme Park World
Starlancer
Star Trek Armada



utilise any of the pieces and tiles found in the game to create their own mind-twisters.

Theocracy

Category: Realtime Strategy

Developer: Interactive Magic

Need: P133, 32MB, SVGA

3D: N/A

Multiplayer: N/A

■ Theocracy is a strategy game set among the battling tribes of Mexico in the 16th century. The game will span the time covering the arrival of the Spanish to the expansion of Tenochtitlan. While historically based, the game has a definite touch of the fantastic: priestly magics that seem to be



heavy on the fire spells, pyramids of sacrifice (sacrifice the hearts of slaves to get manna (needed for magic from the gods) and magic (where priests conduct magical research), and so forth. In battles, players will go against rival tribes with soldiers, trained jaguars, and their priests. Weapons include catapults and the Dragon Killer (an arrow thrower), and spies can help you follow your enemy's movements. When not fighting you have to manage your empire, conducting mining, farming, and ordering your slaves to build the structures of your culture. The ultimate goal of the game will be to defeat rival tribes and repel the Spanish.



Tomb Raider: THE LOST ARTIFACT

Category: Adventure

Developer: Eidos Interactive

Need: P166, 32MB, SVGA, 3D Card

3D: Direct 3D

Multiplayer: N/A

■ From the lofty towers of the late Dr. Willard's Scottish castle to the eerie catacombs of France, The Lost Artifact unveils the dramatic conclusion of the events set in motion in Tomb Raider III. Rumoured to be the legendary Hand of Rathmore, the fifth artifact is the key to unlocking the final secret of the ancient meteor's powers. There is no time to lose, for whom else shares the secret and has joined the hunt?

PATCHES

kick TheAmazingFoodMan)

vote kickban <player> (example: vote kickban Badaxe)

vote open <map> (example: vote open arena_02)

- New log statements for players joining a team, leaving a team, and restarting the game, in order to better present the information to server administrators.

- A "Net Speed" menu option in the "Player Config" section of the "Multiplayer" menu. There are three settings: "Internet" (for 28.8 to 56K modem users), "Fast Internet" (for ISDN and cable modem users), and "LAN" (for DSL or faster connections)

- In addition, there are several fixes for existing problems with the commercial release of The Wheel of Time:

- The number of seals will stay constant. This fixes a bug where players could create extra seals in citadel mode.

- Inactive citadel servers (servers with no players that have been idle for an extended period of time after a game has started) will now restart.

- Spectators are now forced onto a team after 15 seconds of the start of a multiplayer game. This fixes the problem of spectators being mistaken for players during the game.

- Icons on the scoreboard will now display the proper background color (according to skin) for each player.

- The tracer ter'angreal will now find seals wherever they are in the level. If a seal is well-hidden by terrain, etc in the level, the tracer will sometimes go through the obstacle to reach the seal.

- Spaces in player names will now be changed to underscores. This fixes the problem of multi-worded player names being cut off after the first word.

- Machin Shin and the Light Sphere ter'angreal will now function properly in multiplayer. No official maps use either of these things yet.

- Spirit shield will now cancel Swap Places.

- All previous Direct3D enhancements and fixes have been included.

- A previous patch that fixed a copy protection problem with launching multiplayer servers has been included.

- The Wheel of Time servers no longer report their existence to Epic's master server.

- The FString::Parse / appStrfind crash has been fixed.

- Players can no longer hold the Shift key to stay suspended in midair after shifting.

- The Home and Grey Plus keys are now rebound to the "flush" command. If your system uses a Direct3D accelerator card, you may notice gradual performance degradation in certain areas of the game. In these cases, the "flush" command can improve performance dramatically.

- Legion's projectiles will now lose acquisition upon the target's death.

DISC 2 - Grand Prix Special

THE SMELL OF BURNING OIL. SPARE TYRES AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE. A WALL OF SOUND GENERATED BY ENGINES ON THE BRINK OF COLLAPSE. THE ROAD AHEAD COVERED WITH SKID MARKS. DRIVERS THAT MAKE NO SENSE OF RIGHT AND WRONG. NO, IT'S NOT YOUR AVERAGE DAY AT THE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES, THIS IS PC POWERPLAY'S GRAND PRIX SPECIAL.

Grand Prix 2



Category: Driving Sim

Developer: Microprose

Need: 486/DX, 16MB, SVGA

3D: N/A

Multiplayer: N/A

■ Grand Prix II is the ultimate Formula One racing simulation! Fend off challengers at Monaco, blast down the straightway at Monza, and take the checkered flag at Barcelona! Real tracks, real teams, real cars, real sponsors—all with breathtaking, lifelike graphics that truly put you in the cockpit of a Formula One racing car. So realistic it is used by racing drivers as an simulator, Grand Prix II has optional driving aids to allow players of all ages and skill levels to receive maximum enjoyment from the game. Grand Prix II is "the definitive racing experience"!

Windows 2000 Handbook

A computer monitor is shown floating in the air, tilted at an angle. The screen is dark, but a bright, circular light source is visible on the left side of the screen. The background is a vibrant blue sky with a grid of yellow and white light trails, suggesting a digital or futuristic theme. The monitor itself is a standard CRT type with a silver frame.

**EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW
ABOUT WINDOWS & OFFICE 2000**

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Monaco Grand Prix Racing 2

Category: Driving Sim
Developer: Ubi Soft
Need: P133, 16MB, SVGA
3D: Direct 3D
Multiplayer: N/A

■ Monaco Grand Prix Racing 2 pushes the limits of gameplay realism forward by offering exciting new game modes, 3D effects and unprecedented customisation. The game will not only simulate the race, but everything about

the racing world. Just like the pros, players can control every aspect of the race, from preparing a pit stop strategy to adjusting their car during a race.

NASCAR 2000

Category: Driving Sim
Developer: EA Sports
Need: P200, 32MB, SVGA
2MB
3D: Direct 3D
Multiplayer: TCP/IP

■ NASCAR 2000 features



Colin McRae Rally

Category: Driving Sim
Developer: Codemasters
Need: P133, 16MB, SVGA, 3D Card
3D: Direct 3D
Multiplayer: N/A

■ At 29, Scottish born Colin McRae, is one of the world's most exciting rally driving talents. Nine years in motor sport, the youngest driver ever to win the World Rally Championship, and currently the UK's Network Q RAC Rally champion - a title he holds for the third time. Since 1992, Colin McRae has been driving the Subaru Impreza for Prodrive. He has proven he can drive faster than anybody, which has earned him the nickname: The Flying Scotsman. Now you can race like Colin McRae! A Colin McRae Rally championship covers a whole season of rallying in 8 different countries with varying weather conditions and time of day. This demo of Colin McRae Rally includes three tracks: New Zealand, Australia, and Monte Carlo.

Grand Prix Legends

Category: Driving Sim
Developer: Sierra Sports
Need: P166, 32MB, SVGA
3D: 3DFX

■ GPL puts you in the driver's seat of history's most famous race cars on some of the greatest tracks in the world. Race a BRM against Dan Gurney at Zandvoort, or take Jochen Rindt one on one around Monza's flats in your Lotus 49. Experience heart-stopping and white-knuckled action, whether you are negotiating a tricky hairpin or going flat-out down a straightaway.



authentic NASCAR racing with great graphics and gameplay on your PC. Over 30 of NASCAR's elite drivers are featured. Race on any of 18 NASCAR tracks. Take on one of the seven NASCAR legends and test your driving skills against the best. race on on of the five challenging and unique fantasy tracks that dare all drivers. True to life "stock car feel". Compete with up to three other platers via the internet.



Official Formula 1 Racing

Category: Driving Sim
Developer: Eidos Interactive
Need: P133, 16MB, SVGA
2MB
3D: Direct 3D, 3DFX
Multiplayer: N/A

■ Can you imagine the adrenaline rush that your body must experience? Not to mention the incredible noise and feeling of the wind as it rushes past you? At last your imagination is



PATCHES

- NPCs will now lose acquisition upon the target's death.
- Players can no longer freeze corpses.
- The Fork ter'angreal now lasts twice as long.
- The Sever ter'angreal now uses charges 50% more slowly.
- The Sever ter'angreal is now only stopped by spirit, earth, and water shield.
- Seeking projectiles that lose acquisition will no longer explode when they hit a player (or NPC).
- They will continue to float until they strike something in the environment, where they will explode or expire.
- If a client wants to join a server that is running a map the client does not have, the client will now automatically download the map.
- Non-English versions of the game are unable to access the "Advanced Options" menu. All advanced changes should be made directly to the .INI files.
- If you have a card with the S3 Savage 4 chipset and are experiencing rendering problems, change the "Detail Textures" option in the "Hardware" menu to off. This will fix almost all of the rendering problems in the game. However, we were unable to fix the rendering problem in Mission_08c (The Ways, Part II). Please contact your graphics card vendor for updated drivers.
- If you are using Direct3D and The Wheel of Time did not automatically detect Direct3D when you first installed (so you had to manually select it), you should change your video driver to Direct3D again after installing this patch. This will allow the game to optimize its settings for your video card. To reset your Direct3D driver, select the "Change Video Mode" option from The Wheel of Time's Program Group.

SWAT 3: Close Quarters Battle v1.1 Patch

General Game Fixes:
 Mission R (storm drains) now ends correctly - if you disable only 1 bomb, you fail (always did), but now you won't get a medal for it the original fix for the above (in some localized versions) caused you to ALWAYS fail the mission; this has been fixed as well. Mission X (penthouse) now ends correctly - If President Stomas is killed, you are no longer able to play Mission S (city hall); this was confusing people since once Stomas dies your career is lost, even if you complete the objectives for Mission S. Edit boxes / console / anywhere else you can type are fully operational again (this was broken during localization)
 AI Fixes:
 When officers placed in Cover, they will not wander around and will only leave cover if an officer goes down. When officers finish clearing a room, they will not leave that room unless it is to return to the area they entered the room from.

PC GAMEGUIDE

There's developers all across the

world working hard every day and night



for years to get their

games made right. They put a hell of a lot of work in to them,

and they make 'em tough. That's where PC GameGuide comes

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throughs', you'll find out about all the secrets in the games, and you'll know



where all the weird

stuff happens.



In short, there's

enough material in every issue to allow you to live your

gaming lifestyle to the fullest. Live your life the way you

want, with

PC GAMEGUIDE

at your side.





about to become a reality. Official Formula 1 represents the epitome and spirit of Formula One and is one of the select few games to carry the prestigious FIA License.

Sega Rally 2

Category: Driving Sim
Developer: Sega
Need: P200, 32MB, SVGA
3D: Direct 3D

Multiplayer: N/A

■ You got the guts for glory? Rev up your PC and floor it to the finish line! Sega Rally 2 is a high-speed, off-road racing thrill ride. It's an arcade translation. Burn through brutal terrain as you navigate treacherous tracks and unpredictable weather. Maximise your champion potential by fully customising your mean racing machine. You can change tires,



TOCA 2: TOURING CARS

Category: Driving Sim
Developer: Codemasters
Need: P166, 16MB, SVGA
3D: Direct 3D
Multiplayer: TCP/IP

■ TOCA Touring Car Championship features advanced car physics including suspension dynamics, wheel spin, accurate collision reactions, varied traction, and realistic car handling. Thundering sound FX and frighteningly realistic graphics set the scene whilst you race against the likes of Menu, Plato and Tarquini. Touring Cars - The most exciting motor sport. The most exciting motor sport game.

Need for Speed: HIGH STAKES

Category: Driving Sim
Developer: Electronic Arts
Need: P200, 32MB, SVGA
3D: Direct 3D
Multiplayer: N/A

■ Recreated through close collaborations with the world's most renowned car manufacturers, NFS: High Stakes brings you a dream collection waiting to be unleashed on the open road. Speed has its consequences so weigh the risks carefully. Carelessness results in costly damage and flagrant disregard for the law results in strict enforcement from the Highway patrol. You can also choose to uphold the law behind the wheel of high-speed Police cruisers. Prepare for the ultimate driving experience.



suspension, and steering according to road conditions. Four play modes allow you to challenge your speed demon buddies and race fender-to-fender with a split screen view.

Spirit of Speed 1937

Category: Driving Sim
Developer: Hasbro
Need: P2-233, 32MB, SVGA, 3D Card
3D: Direct 3D
Multiplayer: N/A

■ Spirit of Speed 1937 is a Grand Prix simulation set in the years that saw the rise of

those famous, and now legendary, racing cars and drivers. You'll drive the most exciting cars ever built and experience the thrill of total speed; a thrill that swept the world in the Thirties and made spectators flock in their hundreds of thousands to new, purpose built circuits such as Brooklands. Spirit of Speed 1937 transports you to those unbelievable years. These were cars that made no concession to comfort; cars that were beautiful in shape and design; cars that startled the crowds; cars that created a vision of the future. Drive like you've never driven before.



PATCHES

Officers are more responsive to suspects. Less stuttering should be encountered due to AI delays. (Smoother frame rate)
If player is using a 1911, MP5, or MP5SD and switches ammo, any officer with one of those 3 weapons will also switch to that ammo. Officers performing Mirror and Bang actions are less exposed to enemy fire.

The number of times you can shoot an officer before the officers consider you a rogue cop have been increased. The settings for suspect attributes on Hard and Easy have been fixed (some settings made hard easier and vice versa).

Rogue Spear v2.05 Patch

All fixes/changes in the 2.04 patch
The special keyboard keys (arrow keys, numeric keypad, etc.) can once again be remapped under non-English versions of Windows. Rogue Spear should now run under Windows2000. GameSpy support has been added. As part of this, the behavior of the "Announce Server" option has changed. If this option is checked, your game info is broadcast to the GameSpy master server.

The server will no longer pause until the armpatch timeout has expired while waiting for clients who have armpatches turned off. Support has been added for users with multiple network connections to choose which connection to use for a multiplayer game.

The problems with the "Lock Teams" option should be cleared up. The blank dialog that a client received when joining a full game should now display the proper message.

Clients who disconnect during the loading sequence will no longer crash if they reconnect while the game is still in progress or in the results screen.

The armpatch timeout was reduced to 30 seconds meaning laggy clients will not delay multiplayer game starts for more than that period of time.

Clients that disconnect during the loading sequence will no longer delay the game start until the armpatch timeout has expired. Clients who disconnect and rejoin before a game starts will no longer delay the server until the armpatch timeout has expired. Hitting escape during a multiplayer loading sequence will no longer cause a hang or crash.

PLUS

Septerra Core
Jagged Alliance 2
Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation

IN-BOX

Letters Tip #9: Writing “**please print this**” will not increase your chances of publication.

WRITE TO: PC PowerPlay Letters, Level 6, 418A Elizabeth St, Surry Hills, NSW 2010. letters@pcpowerplay.next.com.au

Needed Urgently: More Poo

Hey, I am really dirty with you guys. You stated that Hype-The Time Quest (PCPP #46) requires poo to run it. “Need: Poo, 32MB.” Well, I’ve extracted 32 megs of the stuff and stuck it in the CD-ROM drive, and it still doesn’t work! What the hell is going on? I have to admit, it was hard to gauge the quantity. So maybe I need more poo?

petbird, email

Thanks for pointing this out. We’ll be sure to put some extra poo on next month’s cover-disc.

I’m not a transsexual - honest.

Hil I was just reading issue #46 of PCPP, and found a letter named “Picture any female”. I think the writer of the letter doesn’t know much about roleplaying.

Roleplaying, as the words suggest, means playing a role. The role might or might not be yourself. A good roleplayer is the one who plays the character to the full extent, but not through expressing themselves. Example, when I was playing the Star Wars pen and paper RPG, I played a fruit tree looking Alien student of the force. If I acted like Darth Vader (my personal hero) with that character then I’ll be a failed character (and the game master will have me killed in no time). I play UO a lot too. I have a few male characters and a few female. And each of them have a different background story and personality. I think that’s what an RPG is about. I’m NOT a crossdresser or a transsexual in real life, and when I play a female character, I don’t feel like I’m playing a transsexual character or being a transsexual. What I play is the role of the character.

P.S. The other reason for my female character is that a female character is less likely to get PKed than a male character. (Mine has never even got an attempted PK)

Billy, email

Billy, no-one truly understands the harmless concept of roleplaying. Try explaining to people that you do not WANT to be the voluptuous Amazon warrior - but you really need her skills and potions. Honest.

Unlikely, but it could be the Mr. Skinner I know.

Games are the spawn of the Devil. Games cause our children to be violent. Sick of that? So

Byte Size

Please give a brief and reasonable explanation as to why you have not reviewed South Park yet, as it has been out for AGES now. Oh, and why does Britney Spears have to be so hot?

Cartman & Britney Luvva, email (obviously)

It was a choice between that and Boss Rally. We stand by our decision. And Britney? Well, she’s no Rachel from S Club 7, that’s for damn sure!

LETTER OF THE MONTH

PC Gaming - Not as costly as you might think.

I am sick and tired of people complaining about the cost of PC games.

Developers put so much time and money into games the least we can do is buy them for a decent price. PC games are great value! There are a lot of good games out there that offer a long and enjoyable experience in single player, while multiplayer is almost limitless with a stack of mods and usercreated maps. Here are some of your other options. You could spend \$90 on 3 bottles of Jim Beam and end up in Rockwood cemetery, take \$90 worth of coins to Intensity and play games which are not only \$2 for 2 minutes but also boring and pointless. Or you could buy a lame console which has games priced just as expensively as PC games! Before you assume



I’m loaded with cash, I have to tell you that I only buy about a game every 2-3 months as I simply can not afford much more. But I buy games which will last a long time, and are approved by PC PowerPlay. By the time I have installed it, I have already forgotten what it cost me. Developers realise our money problems, which gives them incentive to create

good games that are worth the \$90 price. Besides, you can pick up some great games such as Unreal and Powerslide for only \$20. Now that’s value! So the next time you walk into your local games store, just think to yourself, what else could I get for \$90? The answer? NOT MUCH!

Andrew Gardiner, email

Good point. It’s worth noting that most games have development cycles measured in years, and that millions can be spent on a game well before it hits the shelves. It’s not the easiest way to turn a buck. Professional wrestling however...

was I - but being a school principal left me well placed to do something about it. With the help of some great teachers, I organised a school-wide study of the great empires of history. The kids scoured the net and our library for info, did great projects, organised a medieval day through a local group complete with jousting and mock battles, and then challenged their parents to games of Age of Empires (1&2) across the school LAN. Heard from the parents’ room - “This is great!”, “It’s just like being there!”, “If my son trashes my village once more he’s grounded” and my personal fave “Oh, fuck!”. The moral of the story? A little context and a lot of understanding can make a difference. Slated next week is the staff vs students vs parents Quake 3 Tournament. Go staff! Cheers.

Ymir - Greg, email

Finally, the educational benefits of gaming are shown to parents! NB: This is the first email from a ‘principal’ that doesn’t contain the word ‘biatch’.



So young, so jaded. A cynical thing of beauty.

I have a few things to whinge and whine about, but I’ll try and keep it short. First, I am getting a little worried about the fact that I am becoming a gaming veteran and I’m only 17! Wherever you play online the place is always full of 7-14 year olds who don’t remember or weren’t alive in the good old days of gaming - when we were stuck with stick figures and pixels the size of the monitor. They don’t know what an Intellivision was (forgivable I suppose, I got mine when I was about three when the Gamesmen were a stall at Fairfield markets), “It was a competitor of Atari that did not make it”, I say. (And it was better, GO STADIUM MUD BUGGIES greatest game on earth!!). “Uh what’s Atari?”, they say, aaaaaahh. And how spoil it they all are! “Oh the graphics suck”, “oh man this game is so unbalanced, why is there so much

Byte Size

I am into the whole vampire thing and I also like the RPG genre. I thought that the game Vampire: The Masquerade Redemption (which I saw advertised in this great mag) would be great. When is it coming out? Can you please review it and what are the system requirements?

The Chosen one, email.

Woah sunshine! Slow down. We tried to get a Vampire preview this month, but had problems with the code. Tune in to next month’s PCPP for Vampiric action.

Byte Size

I was reading your January Issue (PCPP#44) and I noticed on the spine of the magazine it said "Kay!, I love you..." I was just wondering why you put that on your magazine?

Chopper Chopper, email

You might notice that the speaker of said quote also appears on the spine of the magazine...

lag?". Not too long ago graphics meant a stick figure that moved, and lag was non-existent because there was no such thing as online gaming or even the Internet on any large scale. And to all those people whining about how their computer is out of date and gets superseded too fast: be thankful boys and girls because technology goes in an exponential rate (without interference) so it's only getting faster. In short, be thankful for what we have today, be amazed at new things and cherish the old days of gaming because it spawned what we take for granted today.

Christian Kavanagh, (The Lag King), email

A message for the ages, from one who has seen it all. We salute you.

Blantant Suck in Iambic Pentameter

I am writing because...

There is no favourite PCPP for me,
It's not the outstanding features, I fail to see,
It's the lack of bad ones to separate the good,
I'd find one then, I really would...

Every issue has "finesse"

At night, my magazine, I do caress.

For they're all fair dinkum, true blue

Written for people like me and you

Though they're only out once a month...

Women put up with a similar problem and
I've just fallen into the trap that absolutely no
word in the English language rhymes with
"month".

Paul Apthorpe, NSW

I'm more worried that you sleep with and caress the mag.

A Very Good Question

I've been wondering about Windows 2000 in relation to games? People with it say that they dual boot, using W2K for work etc and using Win98 for games. Is this necessary? Is W2K not as good for games, or are they unnecessarily

Byte Size

What is with all these people writing in about Ed? If there is actually anyone out there who doesn't know, it stands for editor!!!

Chris, Perth

Congratulations on unmasking the mysterious 'ed'. Unfortunately, you are wrong. (Huh?- Malcolm) (Teehee! - Ed)



Theme Park World

swapping between the two?

Garth, email

Microsoft has been saying the W2K is not really for gamers. There are many games (such as AvP) that will not even work on it. And do you really want to have two operating platforms on your computer? Go on, play with fire! Unless W2K is proven more stable - and games are only a small part of your computer use - I wouldn't bother.

Fantastic News For Theme Park Fans

I have a few things to say. Firstly I think that your mag kicks arse and you should keep up the hell good work. It keeps me up to date with all the gaming goodness (and your demos are heaps good too). Over the Christmas holidays I purchased Theme Park World (a top game) You guys reviewed it (PCPP#45) and gave it a pretty good rating of 80%, but the reviewer said that you couldn't turn off that little Scottish black dot guide. But you can! All you have to do is 1) Press escape while in the game(which will bring up the menu screen. 2)



Hype

Byte Size

Why do you guys print letters that are paying you out? You even made them letter of the month. Sure, they have good points but wouldn't you rather print letters praising you?

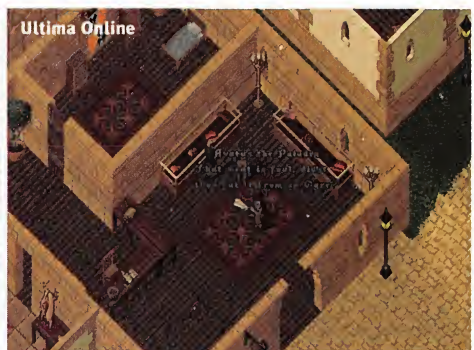
Kaiser_SV, email.

Yes, but our parents have been pretty busy recently, and haven't had time to write.

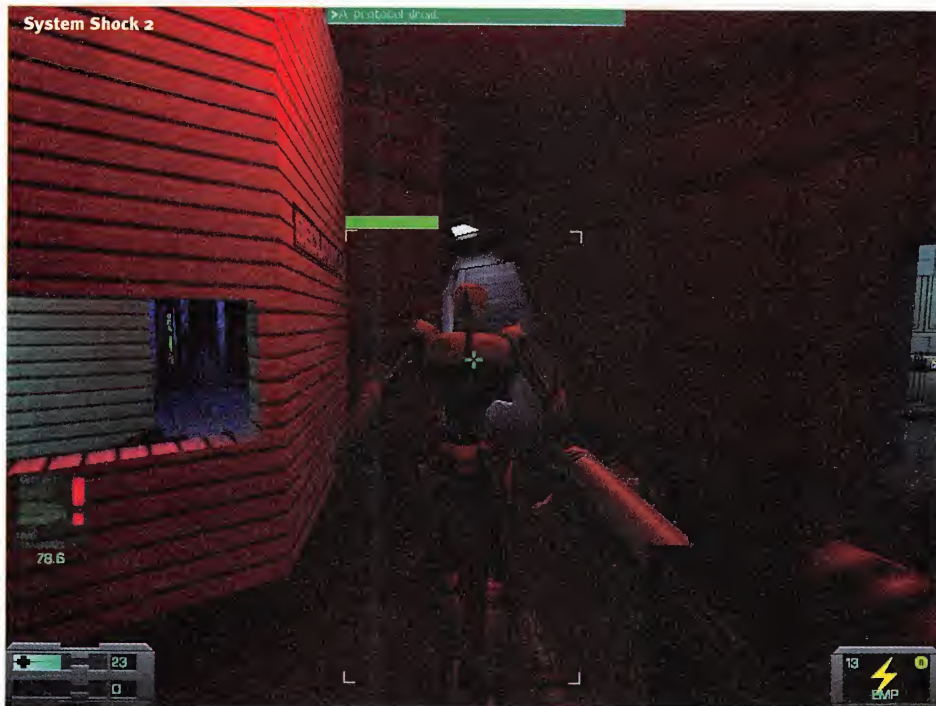
Click on Options. 3) Move your mouse to the top right hand corner of the options menu and click on the advisor on/off switch. 4)Then move your mouse to the bottom right hand corner and click the tick. The only bad thing is when you click on the tick you have to get out then get back in the game, but trust me it's well worth it.

Andrew Balding, email

P.S. I don't mind paying \$9.95 now because your mag is hell good.
Thanks for that. There's something un-nerving about a small black dot being twice as smart as you are.



Ultima Online



Byte Size

How great will Internet gaming be when a high ping is -750 ms. Yes that's right -(negative) 750 milliseconds to get from here to the other side of the world.

Phillip Smith, email

Yes, that will be great. Now hurry up and get it done.

hear your views on abandonware being downloaded from the internet. I have been tempted to use some of this software, but I was wondering if it is illegal? Probably, doesn't hurt to ask though. It's just that I really enjoyed playing Streetrod II (remember?) and I simply cannot find it anywhere! I'm dying for a game and it's sitting there waiting for me to download it and get one more glorious fix of gaming goodness. Basically, should I, a) Download it and suffer the guilt of knowing I may be on the way to becoming a pirate, or b) Wait/Hope/Pray that it will be released on a "Greatest Hits" compilation CD? I would appreciate any feedback on this issue. Thank you,

Captain Porn, email

Firstly, I'm surprised that someone with the net handle of 'Capt. Porn' can have too many moral dilemma's but you have a doozy. Downloading abandonware is very tempting, and there are many sites on the net for that very purpose. But is it right? Is it piracy? Will anyone suffer from the loss of royalties? These are things that you will have to weigh up personally. You have outlined your choices very well, and ultimately, only you can decide what you want to do.

Kid attempts to be pain in ass

Last week we were on a holiday in Sydney. we decided to take a train to the Home Bush Stadium as we went past the Redfern station I thought to my self "I'll drop in and get my pic taken in front of the PC Power Play office." But do you think mum and dad would let me NO! I decided that after that I would be a pain in the ass for the rest of the trip.

Soundman, email

Good on you! Feel free to create further havoc in our name. You might like to note that while our accounts office is in Redfern, we're holed up in the luxurious Surry Hills complex.

Byte Size

I have had ICQ for well over 3 years now and never once had a problem with it. Until now. The problem is that I'm hearing the ICQ "uh-oh" in my head. I am very very freaked out by this, I've changed my ICQ message sound to something different but it has yet to stop. I'm just wondering if this is happening to any other users of ICQ?

Charles Harper, email

No Charles, the rest of us passed on the implant offer.

Byte Size

I've witnessed a lot of people complaining about certain aspects of the images and captions "WAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH " they say. Yet isn't this lot the same bunch that goes out and buys these products? HAHAAHAHAHAHAHA See how much I know about reders (sic) psyche.

GeniusBoy, email

Yes, your insight is astounding. Please help me off the floor.

Locational Damage: Weirdest Answer Yet.

I'd just like to end the locational damage issue for once and for all. (I know it's been awhile, but I procrastinate a lot). Anyway, the first game with locational damage is the great, great grand-daddy of all games. Pong. Yes, Pong. If you remember, the paddle had rounded corners and if the ball hit the corner it would bounce off at an angle, but if it hit the middle it would bounce straight. I explained this to my gamer buddies, whose comments varied from "But it's not damage" to speechless staring and

jawdropping. Today I have done you all a great service, by ending this controversy for ever.

Ben Johnston, email

Well. It's AN answer, that's for sure. All I can think of is "But, it's not damage!"

Forget UT, the smartest bots are here !

While playing System Shock 2 for the 3rd time I happened to notice something interesting. It happens while going through your 4 years of training. In the 3rd year as you come to your last 3 choices there is a window on your left. Through this window there is a protocol droid in there doing the Macarena. Check it out.

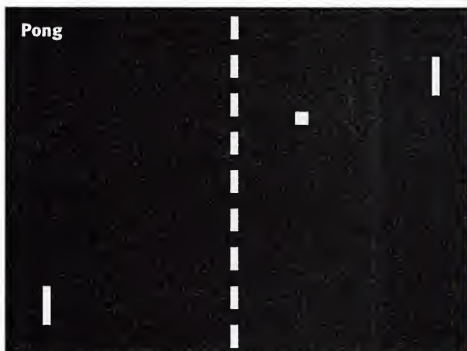
Ras, email

Just when we thought that the damn song was dead, this happens...

Captain Porn has a dilemma

Hi folks,

Great magazine blah, blah, blah..... Anyway to get to the point, I was wondering if I could



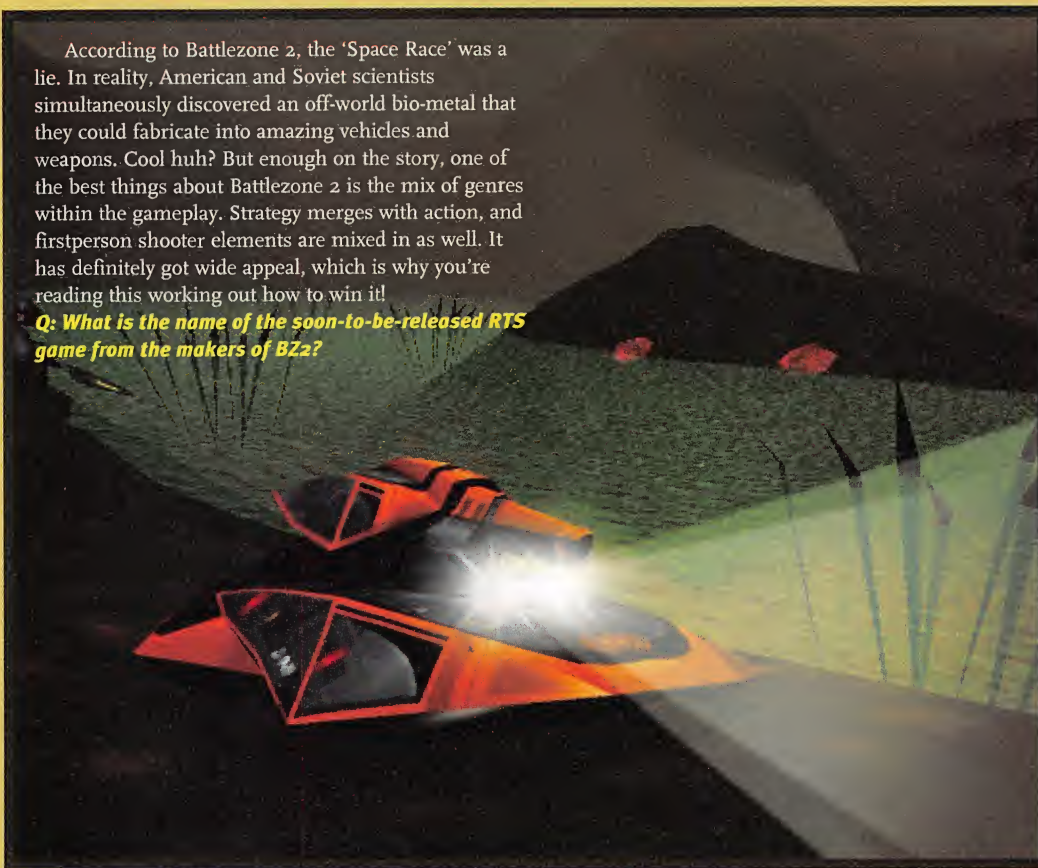
COMPETITIONS

BATTLEZONE 2

5 COPIES OF THE GAME

According to Battlezone 2, the 'Space Race' was a lie. In reality, American and Soviet scientists simultaneously discovered an off-world bio-metal that they could fabricate into amazing vehicles and weapons. Cool huh? But enough on the story, one of the best things about Battlezone 2 is the mix of genres within the gameplay. Strategy merges with action, and firstperson shooter elements are mixed in as well. It has definitely got wide appeal, which is why you're reading this working out how to win it!

Q: What is the name of the soon-to-be-released RTS game from the makers of BZ2?



ASHERON'S CALL

6 COPIES OF THE GAME

In Asheron's Call, a massively multiplayer online role-playing adventure, players are "called" alongside thousands of other adventurers by the mystical character Asheron. Participating in an epic quest, you can choose to compete or cooperate with thousands of others players in a dynamic world. The choices are yours to make - should you make friends, join a party or take on a quest? Additionally, there is the opportunity to customize your alter ego and the balance of their skills, before taking on the magical world offered in Asheron's Call.

Q: What is the name of the land where you adventure in Asheron's Call?



NOX

5 GAME AND T-SHIRT PACKS

Nox is the much-anticipated action RPG game from Westwood Studios. With thumping action and an exciting world to explore, this is a game for RPG fans that need an adrenaline hit! You take either a warrior, conjurer or wizard through your adventures, where they, in the words of our reviewer, "grow in experience, find magic doodads and go shopping for new goodies". Featuring an interactive environment and intricate monsters and magic, Nox will satisfy your desire for other-worldly action.

Q: Which Nox culture lives in the north?



WHERE TO SEND

Write the answer, along with your name and address on the back of an envelope. Tip: Don't forget to put the competition name on the front of the envelope.

All entries close April 25th

Send to:

<competition name>

PC PowerPlay

78 Renwick St.

Redfern NSW, 2016

ISSUE 46 WINNERS

PLANESCAPE TORMENT

Q. What are the names of the Lady of Pain's servants?

A. The Dabus.

N. Measday, Kensington WA

S. Curtis, Padbury WA

A. Phillips, Modbury Heights SA

C. Johnson, Bundaberg QLD

S. Fell, Moonee Ponds VIC

T. Ervin, Lake Cargelligo NSW

SWAT 3

Q. Name 3 automatic weapon calibres and 2 shotgun calibres.

A. Automatic - 5.45mm, 5.56mm, 7.62mm, 9mm, 10mm, .223", .32", .40", .45", .50" Shotgun - 9 gauge, 10 gauge, 12 gauge, 16 gauge, 20 gauge, 28 gauge

P. Farrar, Kerang VIC

M. Witt, Penrith NSW

C. Clark, St. George QLD

C. Kopp, Morayfield QLD

J. O'Maley, East Albury NSW

M. Singh-Mand, Surry Hills NSW

IMPERIUM GALACTICA 2

Q. What is the second closest star to Earth?

A. Proxima Centauri - 4.2 light years. (The sun is the closest).

T. Tuohy, Castle Hill NSW

T. Dance, Connewarre VIC

P. Hill, Research VIC

C. Larsen, Kingston Logan City QLD

S. Chandrasegaran, Leongatha VIC

C. Bock, Allambie Heights NSW

dvd



Terminator 2: Judgement Day

M15+, Columbia Tristar

■ After nine years of occupying TV timeslots, it's great to watch T2 in beautiful widescreen, complete with Oscar winning sound. It's a pity that there isn't much else to the DVD, though. The only bonus feature is the original (admittedly great) theatrical trailer, making for a very empty disc.



The Thirteenth Floor

M15+, Columbia Tristar

■ A software company has created a virtual world, as real as our own but set in 1937. Things go awry when the virtual inhabitants start questioning their own existence... Laughable dialogue and an increasingly muddled plot spoil an otherwise good movie. Bonuses include commentary, concept art gallery, a Cardigans music clip and a crap special effects section.



Darkman

M15+, Columbia Tristar

■ Liam Neeson plays a mentally and physically scarred scientist out for revenge in this comic book action movie by Sam Raimi. Some inspired surrealist sequences, imaginative story and Neeson's acting drag this out of the Z-Grade bin. The theatrical trailer and a few pages of production notes and cast bios are included as bonus features.



The Frighteners

M15+, Columbia Tristar

■ Surprisingly excellent horror/comedy starring Michael J. Fox and directed by NZ's Peter Jackson. Fox plays a conman who can see ghosts in a town plagued by a series of mysterious deaths. He spots the Grim Reaper being extra diligent and cops the blame. Trailer and production notes included.



But it's all tastefully shot, of course.

Immature Audiences Only

THE PANTY RAIDER IS HERE

■ After several years where violence has had a stranglehold over videogame controversy, it's pleasing to see smut making a comeback. The uniquely talented guys behind the howlingly bad Deer Avenger have unveiled their latest exercise in tastelessness, Panty Raider. Ostensibly a kind of Pokemon Snap for perverts, the so-called "game" enlists players to take photos of girls, in particular their underwear. In addition to the essential camera, an assortment of pickup lines, x-ray specs, and some clothes removing glue comprise your voyeur's inventory. There's a plot about aliens, but frankly, who cares? Panty Raider will be rubbish, though that shouldn't deter thousands of sad bastards from buying it. The wankers. Literally.

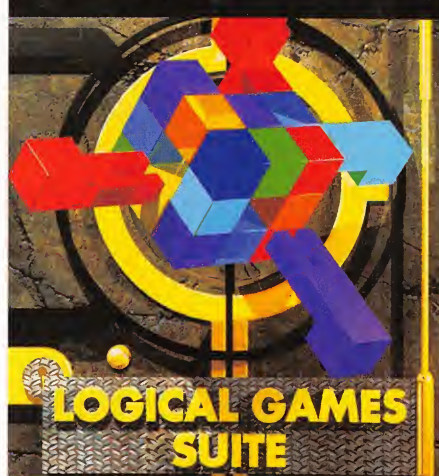
Logical Games Suite

MAKING THINKING FUN! OR NOT...

■ Go on, admit it. It'll make you feel better. You play Solitaire, Minesweeper or even Freecell on the odd occasion. It's nothing to be ashamed of - everybody engages in a bit of it every now and then. The only thing holding us back from hours upon hours with these wee little time wasters: they've been played over and over to death!

The Logical Games Suite then is the perfect antidote for games-lite boredom. Featuring six different mini games designed to be played in-between (of which three are clever and original little ditties and the remaining being careful rip-offs of existing games), this collection will provide some light cranial work-outs. With names like Flip-Flop and Balda, the Logical Games Suite is the epitome of diversionary software.

The Thinker's Six-Pack!



How many ways can you arrange coloured blocks?



Lara? Is that You?

■ The latest hot tip for who will play Lara Croft in the Tomb Raider movie: Angelina Jolie. Finally, one reason to see it..

FAKK!

■ Star of the upcoming Heavy Metal: FAKK 2 game, Julie Strain. Laugh? We nearly hurled.



From 3D to 2D

STAR TREK GAME TRAVELS BETWEEN DIMENSIONS

■ To tie-in with the release in the middle of this year of Voyager: Elite Force, Activision has struck a deal with DC Comics to co-produce a comic book based on the game. Elite Force is the Quake 3 engine firstperson shooter in development at Raven Software. Both it and the comic will detail the star trekkin' shenanigans of the gravel-voiced Captain Janeway and her Voyager crew, but only one will feature skeletal animation. Keen-eyed readers should also be able to pick up clues on how to negotiate certain sections in the game.



Toy Time

TODD MCFARLANE SPAWNS UO2 FIGURES

■ Er, a new range of Ye Olde Quake 2 figurines from the house of McFarlane Toys? A quick glance might fool you into thinking just that. But no, what we have here is the very first glimpse at the human (and non-human) characters to feature in Origin's Ultima Online 2.

The occasion - the New York Toy Fair 2000. Surprising, because the announcement and subsequent release of photos of the toys is the first solid look at the visual direction of this intriguing sequel. Featuring an attention to detail that is McFarlane Toys' trademark, these figurines seem like they'd be more at home next to KISS dolls than a cloth map and an ankh pendant.

Judge for yourself. Looks like we're not in Kansas any more, Toto.

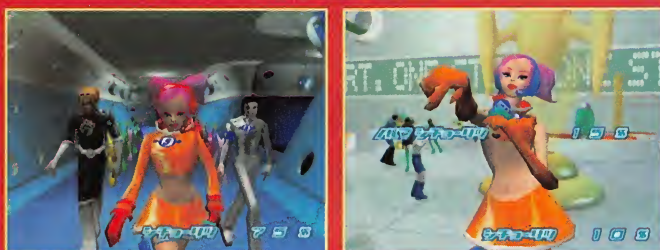
Games we'd love to see on PC

No.2: Space Channel 5 (Dreamcast)

■ If there's one regret PC owners like ourselves have about our games machine of choice it's the almost complete lack of interest from Japanese developers. Sure, it makes sense considering the small PC market in Japan, but it's also a tragedy of tsunami proportions when we miss out on downright surreal experiences such as Space Channel 5.

Taking its cue from "rhythm action" games like Parappa and Dance Dance Revolution, Space Channel 5 is a wide-eyed, rainbow-splashed excursion through lurid landscapes accompanied by a day-glo soundtrack that's as catchy as it's disposable. The gameplay simply consists of tapping the right button at the right time, maintaining the beat as the game's impossibly-skirted hero Ulala struts, dances and blasts aliens.

Only the Japanese could create a game so absurdly entertaining. Don't laugh, we're the ones missing out.



cd

Handsome Boy Modelling School

"So... How's your girl?" (Tommy Boy)

■ A concept album from hip hop legend Prince Paul is a special thing - just check the line up: De La Soul, Del, Mike D, DJ Shadow, Biz Markie. Even better, it's stylistically varied, smart and funny. One of the best albums of the year and proof that hip hop isn't dead.

Stereolab

"Cobra and Phases..." (Elektra)

■ Music critics like Stereolab simply because the best adjectives to describe their uniquely stylish and poised, metronomic hypno-funk is the song titles themselves: "Blips Drips and Strips", "Op Hop Detonation" and "Strobo Acceleration". Cheers!

Krust

"Coded Language" (Talkin' Loud)

■ Making drum 'n bass serious, not-only-for-the-dancefloor, music has been pursuit of many artists craving credibility. Krust's attempt initially impresses, but after repeated listening it can come off as pretentious, due mainly to the overly serious vocalists and strings.

Folk Implosion

"One Part Lullaby" (Interscope)

■ The Folk Implosion's third full length recording marks a more pronounced move towards guitar pop than ever before. Gloriously over-produced, One Part Lullaby is a meandering collection of sweet pop tunes - a perfect accompaniment to post-relationship turbulence.

URBAN LEGEND OR URBAN FACT?

A Special Read Error Investigation by Dan Steadman

We've all heard those computer stories that end in you shaking your head, muttering in disbelief, and silently cursing Windows for bringing all these uneducated computer users into the world. But really, how many of these stories are true and how many are the invention of a bored technical support worker from Utah named Todd?

#1 "Help, my cup holder has snapped off!"

Quite possibly the Adam and Eve of all computer urban legends, the old story about the CD-ROM drive being used as a drink holder is initially easily dismissible, but in practice actually turns out to be fairly believable. I ejected the tray from my aging 16x drive and placed a hot cup of coffee on it. Voila, instant convenience, apart from the fact that my drive is exactly the same height as the arms on my chair, and therefore the slightest movement to my left produced a chain reaction that led to my drive retracting and my coffee on the floor. My later efforts with a 4-litre wine cask were even less successful.

Urban Legend Verdict: Thumbs Down.

#2 "I can't seem to operate my footpedal!"

To the enlightened PCPP reader, the mouse doesn't even look like a footpedal, but apparently some people think that is what it is for. Intrigued, I tried to perform a few simple operations with the mouse in full accelerator position. My quest to open up Freecell though, ended up with me deleting my Half-Life save games, and accidentally changing my desktop wallpaper to a picture of the girls from S Club 7. Actually, I'm fairly happy about the latter. While the mouse is uncontrollable, the old NES joy pad is pretty useable though.

Urban Legend Verdict: Thumbs Down

#3 "Er, I need to get on that Internet dohickey."

After the tales of people trying to get on the Internet with only a modem, or even just a TV, I decided to see if any store or ISP would get me on the Internet without a computer. Disappointingly, all of them took me through a long - and usually boring - list of things I need to get on-line. Even when I just resorted to the basic question "Get me on the Internet", the typical answer was "So, what kind of computer do you have?" Not even a Channel Seven viewer could fail to get on-line: so sadly, the story is a myth. Unless your name is Bubba.

Urban Legend Verdict: Thumbs Down

#4 "Oh crikey, there's a squeaking inside my computer!"

The old "mouse living inside the computer" story sounded fairly plausible to my ears, so I went down to my local pet store and bought "Mouse", my new pet mouse. (I've never been big on cryptic names.) After lovingly putting him on top of my sound card, I decided that the little fella might be a little cold, so I fired up the 3dfx card. A quick check later and it was down to the pet store to get "Mouse 2". Mouse 2 fared a little better, finding a cosy spot in the corner of the case. His decision to gnaw through the internal power cables wasn't an incredibly sensible one though. I then aimed a little bigger, and "borrowed" next door's



pet Doberman. In retrospect, it probably wasn't a good experience for either my computer, myself or Ripper. The scars have almost healed now though, which is good news.

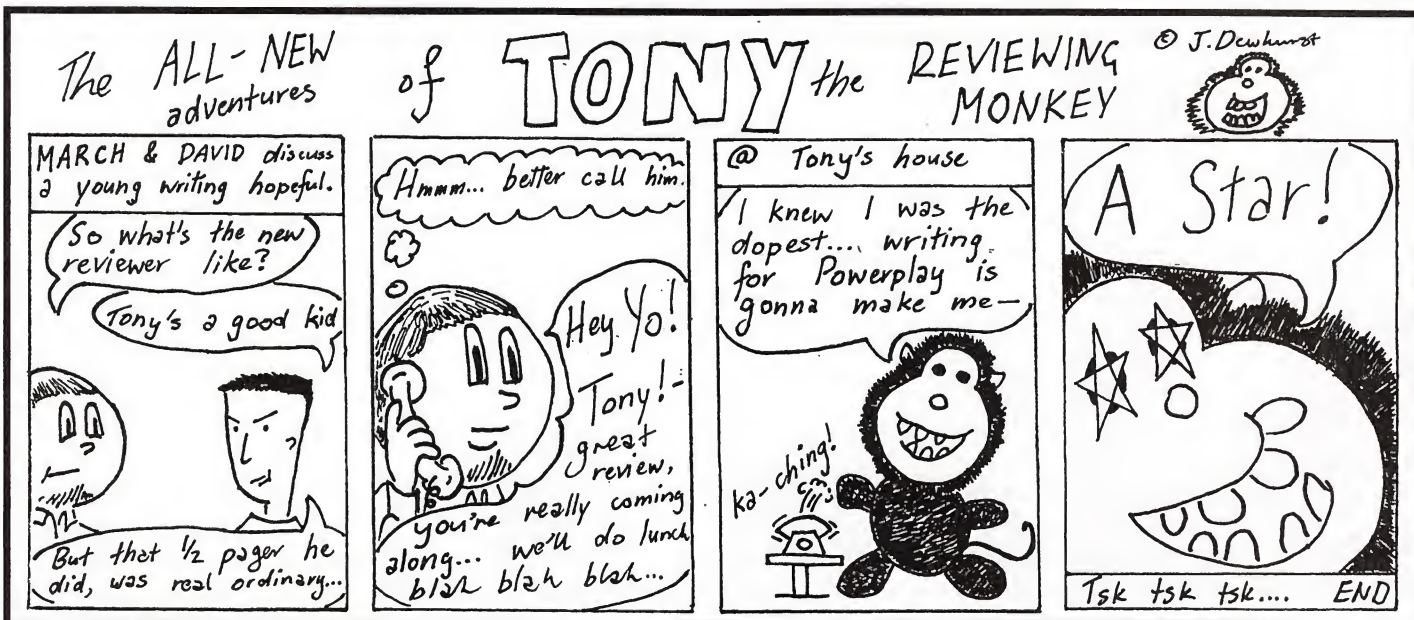
Urban Legend Verdict: Two Painful Thumbs Down

#5 "I keep getting lots of spaces in my typing."

Finally, the rather desperate myth of females inadvertently pressing keys with their breasts when they lean over the keyboard is a favourite among one-handed Internet users. Being both a geek and a writer, I've

developed a pretty good set of manboobs myself, so I put on the plunging neckline to see for myself. Despite repeated leanings (and I could never think of a reasonable excuse to look at the monitor from a distance of one centimetre), my cleavage never got close to touching the keyboard. I asked for a female volunteer, but being both a geek and a writer, I don't actually know any females. However, I have booked myself some porn star implants for next month, so I'll give you an update then.

Urban Legend Verdict: Inconclusive



OVER-CLOCKING

A Cautionary Tale

After receiving my copy of Sega Rally 2 from the plush offices of PCPP, I looked at the box at the system specs. When you've only got a meagre P200, you spend a lot of time looking at system specs in the vain hope that they still make games you can run. Happily, the phrase "P200" was on the box. Not so happily it was preceded by the words "You are dreaming if you think you can run this game on a..." Bummer.

By the time I got home though, I had a few ideas on how to get Sega's racer to run on my no-longer-mighty machine. While I distracted the Sega Rally 2 box by showing it old tapes of Hey Dad in the lounge, I sticky-taped a sign to the front of my machine saying "This is a P3-700 with lots of RAM and a truly fear-inducing

mother of a 3D card inside." My ploy was so sneaky - so Wile E Coyote-like in its underhandedness - I didn't expect the game to refuse to run. But amazingly, it did. This game was obviously smarter than I gave it credit for, but I wasn't beaten yet.

A new, more subtle strategy was in order, so I sat the game down on the couch to reason with it. Over a pot of tea, I put forward numerous reasons why myself, a professional games writer, would have a top of the line Pentium 3, and not a pissweak P200. After three hours of impassioned debate though, the game's silent treatment got the better of me. It took all of my strength not to break down and admit to my computer-owning crimes. This was more tense than

a World War 2 submarine movie.

The next day I got up bright and early and quickly tried out the game once more. Despite the torment I had put it through though, it showed more resilience than I expected by still refusing to run. That was it! The game had beaten me and left me a broken man. I called PCPP with the bad news, expecting a few words of encouragement and sympathy.

Instead I got a typically cold-hearted editorial response: "Have you ever thought about just upgrading your computer?"

Upgrade my computer? But it's a vintage model!

Next Month: Dan Steadman attempts to hypnotise his computer.

ALTERNATIVE READING

Cover concepts that didn't quite work out...



THEODORE



When God told Bob he had to clean up earth, he didn't mention it would be quite this disgusting.

next month in **PC** PowerPlay



diablo II

TO HELL AND BACK...

FULL REPORT ON BLIZZARD'S LONG-AWAITED SEQUEL

PCPP #49 ON SALE MAY 3, 2000



hit the net



email office



report to the board



WEB **W/O** WIRES



The Motorola L Series+ lets you access the Internet from almost anywhere - so you can send emails, get the latest news headlines, monitor the stock market and even check the weather* (very important for those important 'board' meetings). It's all thanks to new technology called WAP (Wireless Application Protocol). The L Series+ also has VoiceNotes™, VibraCall™, Voice Activation and Triband GSM - the technology you need to ride the new wave of communication. www.shop.motorola.com.au



MOTOROLA

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